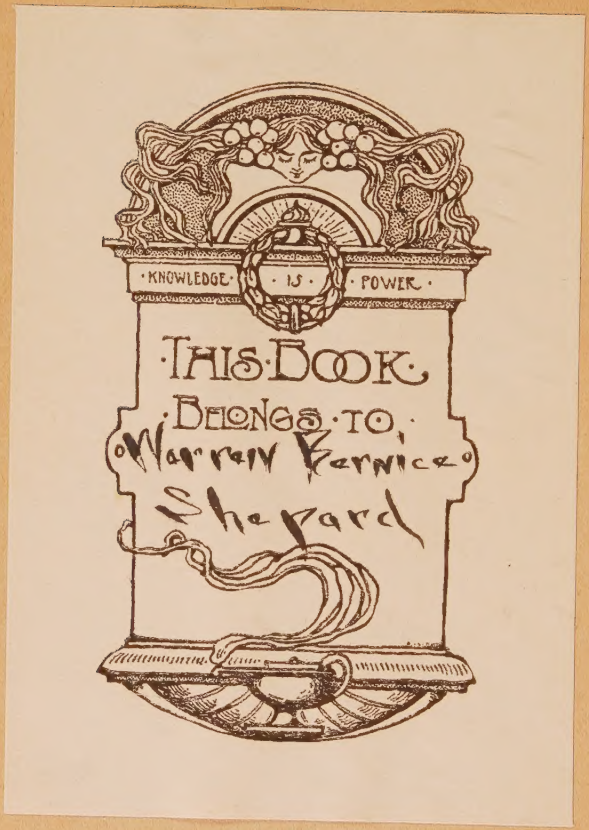
FRANCE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THE WESTERN FAÇADE OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL.

FRANCE

BY

GORDON HOME

WITH 32 FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1914

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

Introductory 1

CHAPTER II

The Genesis and Characteristics of the French . 6

CHAPTER III

Family Life—Marriage and the Birth-rate . . 23

CHAPTER IV

How the French govern Themselves 49

CHAPTER V

On Education and Religion. 67

CHAPTER VI

Some Aspects of Paris and of Town Life in General 86

CHAPTER VII

PAGE
Of Rural Life in France 114

CHAPTER VIII

The Rivers of France 143

CHAPTER IX

Of the Watering-Places 169

CHAPTER X

Architecture — Roman, Romanesque, and Gothic — in France 193

CHAPTER XI

The National Defences 205

INDEX 213

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

		FACING PAGE
1.	The Western Façade of Amiens Cathedral .	*Frontispiece*
2.	Combourg, a typical *Château* of the Mediaeval Type .	8
3.	In the Café Armenonville in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris	17
4.	In the Place du Théâtre Français, Paris . . .	25
5.	Evening in the Place d'Iéna, Paris	32
6.	In the Centre of Paris	41
7.	The Market-Place and Cathedral at Abbeville . .	48
8.	Five-o'clock Tea in Paris	65
9.	Children of Paris in the Luxembourg Gardens . .	72
10.	Le Puy-en-Velay in the Auvergne Country . .	75
11.	La Roche, a Village of Haute Savoie . . .	78
12.	A typical *Cocher* of Paris	90
13.	Autumn in the Champs Elysées, Paris . . .	95
14.	A Breton *Calvaire*: the oratory of Jacques Cartier .	123
15.	A Peasant Child of Normandy	126
16.	The Cathedral and part of the Old City of Chartres .	137
17.	The Château of Amboise on the Loire . . .	144
18.	Château Gaillard and a loop of the Seine . .	152
19.	Mont Blanc reflecting the sunset glow . . .	155

FACING PAGE

20. Evian les Bains on Lake Geneva 158
21. The Chapel on the Bridge of St. Bénézet, Avignon . 161
22. The Château of Chenonceaux 168
23. St. Malo from St. Servan 171
24. Monte Carlo and Monaco from the East . . . 174
25. Mont St. Michel at High Tide 177
26. Cap Martin near Mentone 165
27. The Vegetable Market, Nice 187
28. The Pyrenees from near Pamiers 190
29. The Galerie des Glaces at Versailles . . . 192
30. The Roman Triumphal Arch at Orange . . . 194
31. French Destroyers 201
32. Soldiers of France in Paris 208

Sketch Map of France on page 212.

FRANCE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The more one knows of France and the French at first hand, and the more one reads the ideas and opinions of other people concerning this great people, so does one feel less and less able to write down any definite statements about the country or its inhabitants. Whatever conviction one possesses on any aspect of their characteristics is sure to be shaken by the latest writer, be he a native or a foreigner. Every fresh sojourn in the country upsets all one's previous ideas in the most baffling fashion. One used to think the Parisian *cocher* a bad driver, and then discovers a writer who eulogises his skill. When he knocks over pedestrians, says this writer, he does so because his whole life is given up to a perpetual

state of warfare with the public, from whom he gains his livelihood. This point of view being new to one, it takes a little time before it can be safely rejected or accepted, and before this process is completed a man of most decided views, and possessed of a wide knowledge of France and the French, comes along with the statement that no Frenchman can drive. He supports it with a dozen good reasons, and leaves one with a bias towards earlier convictions.

It used to be axiomatic, platitudinous, that Frenchwomen dressed better than Englishwomen. People whose knowledge of France is, say, ten, perhaps fewer, years out of date would accept this without a thought, and yet one is inclined to think that the Frenchwoman's pre-eminence has gone. No doubt all that is truly *chic*, all that is essentially dainty in feminine attire, emanates from the brain of the Parisian, but the women of the French capital no longer have any monopoly in the wearing of clothes that give charm to the wearer.

Then as to French cooking. The day has not long passed when to breathe a syllable against the cooking of the French would be to proclaim oneself a savage, but what does one hear to-day ?

Openly in London drawing-rooms people are heard expressing their preference for the food supplied in English homes and hotels. They dare to state that many of the courses provided in French hotels and restaurants are highly flavoured, but uneatable; that the meat provided is nearly always unaccountably tough and full of strange sinews and muscles that give one's teeth much inconvenience; that the clear soup is commonly little more than greasy hot water containing floating scraps of bread and vegetables; that the sweet course is incomparably inferior to that of the English table.

The difficulties confronting those who attempt to describe the Gallic people are only realised when one grasps the fact that almost anything one writes is true or untrue of a fragment of the nation. Who could suppose that the inhabitants of soil facing the North Sea would have similar virtues and faults to those who dwell on the shores of the Mediterranean? They seem of a different race, and yet a curious unity pervades the Norman, the Breton, and the Burgundian, the Provençal, the dwellers on the great wheat plain, and the Iberians of Basses Pyrenees. One is tempted to deal with each portion of the country

separately, but to do so would make it necessary to produce a library of books, and in trying to pick out qualities common to the whole nation one is checked at every turn by the contradictions that present themselves continually. With the mind resting for a time on one part of France, it would be easy to describe the people as very clean, but mental visions of other parts arrest the pen, and a qualified statement is alone possible. Then the mind hungers for an opportunity of preparing a series of maps, showing by various colours where the people live who possess this or that salient quality. If such maps were presented to the reader, and supposing that districts in which the inhabitants were inclined towards thriftiness were shown red, the whole country would be of the same glowing colour, and therefore this map need not be drawn, but the same does not apply to wages and prosperity, nor to religious fervour, nor to the social manners of the people, and on these and a very large number of subjects the variations are so great that what the writer has ventured to condense in the chapters which follow may be open to much limitation, and even to contradiction. He has always felt a very deep apprecia-

tion of the country and the people, and the joy of arriving in France is one of the pleasantest things in his experience. The curious smells that are wafted to the deck of the steamer as it is tied up by the quayside bring to him in one breath the essence, as it were, of the life of France, which has for him so great an attractive force. In that first breath of France, the faint suggestion of coffee brings to mind the pleasant associations of meals in picturesque inns or in the cafés of Paris in sight of the amazing movement of the city; the suspicion of vegetables recalls the colour and human interest of countless market-places and chequered patches of cultivation on wide hedgeless landscapes; and that indefinable suggestion of incense and a dozen other impalpable things brings with it the whole pageant of French life, its colour and gaiety, its movement, its pathos, and its grand moments, all of which act as a magnet and irresistibly attract him to the southern shores of the Channel.

CHAPTER II

THE GENESIS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRENCH

In fairly clear weather the strip of salt water cleaving England from France seems so narrow, that to a Brazilian familiar with the Amazon it might be taken for nothing more than a great river. To a geologist the English Channel is a recent feature in the formation of Europe of to-day, while the modern aeronaut regards it as a blue mark on the landscape as he wings his way from London to Paris. Turbine steamers plough from shore to shore in less than an hour, so that on a windless day the crossing is a mere incident in the journey between the capitals; yet the race which dwells on the chalk uplands terminating precipitously at Cape Gris Nez is so entirely different from the people who have for the last thousand years made their homes

on the Kentish Downs, that the twenty miles of sea seem scarcely adequate to explain the complete severance. The intercourse between the inhabitants of Gaul and Britain must have been both considerable and constant for some time before the domination of Rome had swept up to the Channel, for it is known from Caesar's records that the Armoricans, who extended from Cape Finisterre to the Straits of Dover, were able to send 220 large oak built vessels against his galleys. From the same source one is aware of the large trade carried on across the narrow sea, and there were Celtic tribes in the south of England colonised from the Belgae of the Continent. Further than this, the megalithic remains of Wiltshire and Brittany suggest a very real and remarkable link between the peoples of Britain and Gaul. Caesar and Strabo are both very definite in their statements that the people of Kent were similar to the Gaulish tribes, not only in the way they built their houses, but also in their appearance and their manners. The coming of Roman civilisation tended to restrict racial intermingling, and from the beginning of the Christian era the Channel became more and more a real frontier. When Norsemen had

settled both in England and in the north of France, this frontier again weakened and vanished with the Norman Conquest of England, but racially there was practically no sympathy across the water beyond what might have been felt for the Welsh and the Britons in Cornwall. Thus, from the Romanising of Britain onwards, the similarity between the peoples who faced one another across the Channel waned. It is quite probable that in neither country was there any appreciable infusion of Italian-Roman blood among the Celtic populations, for the conquering legions were composed of troops raised from all parts of the Empire, but in Britain the Romanised population was swept westwards by new invaders from northern Europe, while the Romanised Gauls were never ousted from the territory they had held east of the Rhone and the Rhine. The Latin tongue had probably made very little headway in Britain, while in Gaul the Romans had thrust their language upon the Gallic tribes. It was not, however, the classical Latin of Livy and Virgil, but most probably the colloquial Latin of the common soldier and camp-follower. This debased Latin formed the solid foundation of the literary language of France of to-day.

COMBOURG. A TYPICAL CHÂTEAU OF THE MEDIÆVAL TYPE.

The English Channel is therefore a very effective dividing line between two peoples completely different in every characteristic. But who were these people whom the Romans called Galli ?

Their coming was possibly not earlier than 600 or 700 B.C., and by 300 B.C. they occupied that part of Europe now covered by France, Belgium, Holland, Rhenish Germany to the Rhine, with Switzerland and northern Italy. No doubt they had moved westward from southern Russia in that Aryan stream of which they had formed a part. In the south they intermingled with the ancient Iberian population ; they appear to have remained fairly pure in the centre, while in the north they became more or less mixed with Teutonic elements pressing forward across the Rhine. Besides occupying what is now known as France, these Celts settled or squatted all over northern Italy, and drove a very considerable wedge into central Spain, where they formed the fierce warrior people called Celtiberians, who served in masses in the Carthaginian and Greek armies, and held out against the Romans until about 100 B.C. Further than this a wing of these Gaulish Celts made their

way along the Danube, wasted Greece in about 270 B.C., and formed an important settlement in Asia Minor which was called Galatia up to about A.D. 500.

The Celts in Italy were the first to come under the heel of Rome between 300 and 190 B.C. Gaul itself followed, and a Roman province, named Narbonensis after its chief city Narbo Martius (now Narbonne), was formed along the Mediterranean coast. All the rest of Gaul was added between 58 and 50 B.C. by Gaius Julius Caesar, and from that time until the disruption of the Roman Empire was one of its greatest and richest provinces.

With the weakening of Roman domination in the 4th century A.D. a fierce German race or confederacy, calling themselves "Franks" (*i.e.* Freemen), flooded into northern Gaul. They gave their name to the country they had subjected, and for some five centuries their Merovingian and Carolingian kings ruled without interruption. The Franks were numerically a small proportion of the population of France during this period, and they and other tribes which had irrupted into Gaul during the same period gradually became completely absorbed by the

stubborn Celto-Roman people, and their language was to a great extent lost owing, perhaps, to the fascination the splendour of Latin would exert upon the users of an uncouth tongue. The Franks had disappeared as a race by the year 1000, but their name had become permanently attached to the land and the people in whose midst they had settled—a phenomenon repeated in the case of Bulgaria.

Towards the north and east of France there is a very considerable Germanic strain, although entirely French in language, customs, and sympathy. In the south-east the people have much Italic blood in their veins, while in the extreme south-west the Gascons and the Landais (the people of Les Landes near Bordeaux) are probably of Iberian stock, nearly related to the Basques who belong to the pre-Celtic inhabitants of France, and are therefore more or less distinct from the main mass of the population who remained Gallic with a Romanised language. Although it is true that, with one exception, all the different elements have been quite assimilated, the *patois* spoken in some districts is barely comprehensible to the ordinary Parisian. The exception is Brittany, where the people are an

admixture of the primitive inhabitants with Gauls and Celts from Britain who migrated to the peninsula during the 4th and 5th centuries, their language being pure Celtic to this day, and so similar to Welsh that a Breton onion-seller in Wales can make himself understood without much difficulty. The seamen Brittany provides for the French navy are undoubtedly the finest sailors the country possesses, and they have for some time past formed a very real portion of French sea power.

The people of Normandy have a strong infusion of Scandinavian blood and certain peculiarities of speech, but they are scarcely greater than the difference between that of the Londoner and the Yorkshireman. Whatever has been the stock from which the inhabitants of modern France has sprung, their extraordinary capacity of assimilation seems to have endowed them generally with those national characteristics popularly labelled the genius of the French. This process, discernible all through the pages of history, seems as vital to-day as ever.

To any one familiar with the French people, it is a matter for astonishment that the average Briton fails in the most profound fashion to realise the

most obvious of the national characteristics of his neighbours across the Channel. The popular notion is that the French are a frivolous people, devoted to pleasure; they are supposed to be veritable Miss Mowchers for volatility; to speak with extreme rapidity; to have a taste for queer dishes which the same Briton regards with abhorrence; and are, generally speaking, a people with the lowest of morals. All these ideas are more or less erroneous, and only as the average Englishman comes to learn the truth can the French character be better understood. In the first place, the French, far from being a mass of frivolity, are one of the most serious peoples in the world. They have to such an extent woven a care for the future into the fabric of the nation, that the humblest *bonne-à-tout-faire*, the underfed *midinette*, and simplest son of the soil, aim at and generally succeed in becoming modest holders of State *rentes*. Instead of the happy-go-lucky methods of the middle and lower class Anglo-Saxon, who will turn a family of sons and daughters loose upon the world with very little thought as to their future beyond the bare necessities of food, clothing, and shelter, the French parent regards it as his duty to see that

each daughter is provided with a *dot* suitable to her position, and the Civil Code requires a parent to leave a proportion of his property to each member of his family. French men and women work out their incomes with such exactness that they know to a *sou* what they have to spare for pleasure, and with a very large mass of the people in town and country that margin is so microscopically small, that pleasure in the sense of a commodity that is bought is often only obtainable at long intervals. In Paris, where the inaccurate ideas of French life are generally gathered, it is the almost universal custom for a family to dine at a restaurant on Sundays, in order that the *bonne-à-tout-faire*, who cooks the meals and waits at table in the average flat, may have most of the day off. Thus the week-end visitor to the capital sees in every café and restaurant families dining in public, and gathers the impression that all these people are spending their money on an evening's amusement. Probably, if the flats to which these people return a little later were examined, it would be found that there was practically nothing in the tiny larders, for it is the French custom to buy daily at the markets in small quantities at

the lowest prices, and the meals taken at a restaurant on Sunday do not entail any loss through deterioration of food at home.

It is wrong, too, to suppose that the average French people speak more rapidly than the Anglo-Saxon. They are more vivacious, and they often put more emphasis and gesticulation into their conversation than their island neighbours; but there are Englishmen who have a right to speak, who will affirm with the greatest assurance that the French are the slower and more deliberate speakers of the two! No doubt it will take a long time to entirely eradicate from among ill-informed Anglo-Saxons the notion that a French menu is largely composed of strange creatures not usually regarded as edible, but the excellence of French food and cooking is getting so widely known and appreciated that this ancient misconception is being steadily dissipated.

Perhaps it is because no sooner does the visitor land at Calais or Boulogne, or step out of the railway terminus in Paris, than he sees a kiosk where comic papers full of improper drawings are boldly exhibited, that he comes to the conclusion that the French are an entirely immoral people. But painful as it is to witness

this flaunting of vulgar suggestion before the casual passer-by, it is not quite a fair gauge by which to take the standard of morals in France. There was no wave of Puritanism in France as in England, and the standard of public decency is therefore lower, but French home life is probably nearly as moral as in England, and it is a well-known fact that girls belonging to the middle classes live irreproachable lives in the almost unnatural seclusion maintained by their parents. The attitude of the young man towards the other sex before he marries is certainly lamentably inferior to that of the Anglo-Saxon who may fall from the ideal to which he has been trained, but nevertheless regards his failure as a disaster, while the French youth looks upon such matters as a recognised feature of his adolescence.

Justification for the idea prevalent in Anglo-Saxon countries that the French are exceptionally lax in their morals, can be found in the fact that in all ranks of French society there is no secrecy maintained when irregular relations have been established, and also in the fact that the illegitimate births are considerably more than twice as numerous as those of Great Britain and Ireland. It should be remembered, however, that Germany

IN THE CAFÉ ARMENONVILLE IN THE BOIS DE BOULOGNE, PARIS.

stands only a trifle better than France in this matter, while six other European countries are infinitely worse.

What are to the man in the street the characteristics of the French race are, therefore, so wide of the truth, that until simple and accurate books on this great and talented people are used in all British schools it will take a considerable time to put matters straight. In the meantime an opportunity occurs here to do something in this direction.

More than any other nation on the whole face of the earth the French are a people of great ideas. They frequently leave their neighbours to carry out the conceptions with which they enrich the world, but they think on a great scale, and produce men and women whose agility of mind is often hugely in advance of the age in which they live. It was a Frenchman who first thought it feasible to sever Africa from Asia, and made the first attempt to cut the cord that unites North and South America; it was the French who led the way in applying the internal combustion engine to locomotion, and they have dazzled the world with the brilliant performances of their flying men. A Frenchman was the pioneer in tunnel boring, and

his son Isambard Brunel devised a railway on such a magnificent scale that it still remains an ideal which engineers regard with admiration. Another Frenchman, Charles Bourseul, invented the telephone, and yet another led the way in the science of bacteriology. As conscious empire-builders on a world-wide scale the French were also putting their ideas into practice when England was still thinking commercially in such matters. England as a whole always does think in pounds, shillings, and pence, and in empire-building possessions have mainly been added to the British Empire with the idea of increasing its trade. In naval developments France recently led the way with the submarine and submersible, setting an example to the rest of the world which has been followed so thoroughly that the lead in this arm of sea-power is no longer with the pioneer country. Innumerable instances could be given of the initiative in big ideas being taken by Frenchmen, and of other nations taking them up and developing, perfecting, and sometimes consummating for the first time projects devised in France.

Mr. C. F. G. Masterman has laid stress on the patience of the British working man, but that

willingness to endure hard circumstance is not so pronounced in England as in France. There endurance continues too long, so that when harsh treatment becomes absolutely intolerable there is not a fraction of patience left, with the inevitable result that explosions of varying degrees of violence take place. British workers bestir themselves and demand redress of grievances before they are at the end of their patience, and can therefore wait while the country becomes familiar with their new needs. England has thus known no "Reign of Terror," nor does the Government of the day suddenly collapse before some public outburst of passionate feeling. The people who can endure the inconvenience of a Government monopoly in matches, which makes that commodity vile in quality while costing a penny a box, must indeed be patient.

The average Frenchman desires to live a quiet and peaceful life without hurry or bustle. He is content with long hours of work if he can carry on that occupation at an easy pace, for he is steadily industrious, and his easy-going nature lets him disregard misgovernment too long for safety, for when at last he is roused out of the ambling pace of his normal life, underground

elements of cruelty and bloodthirstiness may come to the surface with sudden and terrible swiftness. If fair and honest government and tolerable conditions of labour could be perpetually guaranteed to France, there is scarcely a people in the world who would live more peaceable and uneventful lives, for the British relish for adventure and the enthusiasm for hustle to be found in the United States finds no echo in the average French mind. Alongside this disinclination to go helter-skelter through life is the fact that in certain ways the French people are all artists, and that they have the critical faculty developed to a most remarkable degree; their capacity for discrimination and criticism might indeed be singled out as the most salient characteristic of the whole people. Even the humblest citizen is seldom prepared to express unqualified admiration for any piece of handicraft or painting, but will look with thoughtful care on the object of consideration, and probably supply an intelligent reason for only giving it partial approval.

On the other hand there is a great tendency to over fondness for generalising without sufficient data; there is a delight in reasoning and logic which often leads to false conclusions owing to a

want of real knowledge. This love of reasoning and the capacity for criticism seem to have given the nation a regard for consequences and a care to avoid the more or less inevitable economic day of adverse reckoning which comes to those who are careless and indefinite in their arrangements. It is the general thriftiness found all through the peasant and bourgeois class of France that has, to such a great extent, saved the various grades in the social scale from emulating the ways of those above them. The disgrace of insolvency is so terrifying to a French household that a thousand economies are practised to keep such a contingency afar off, and in following this rule of life much social intercourse, and nearly all effort to seem more opulent than the family purse will permit, go overboard. Thus it has become a characteristic of a most definite order that a Frenchman's home is his castle in a fashion far more real to the stranger than is the case in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Briefly it may be stated that the French are a serious, cautious, patient, and exceedingly industrious and home-loving race, enjoying their hardly earned hours of pleasure in a more demonstrative fashion than do the nations whose

climates are less sunny. They are critical and fond of generalisation, are capable of large and splendid moments of inspiration, and have on the whole feminine rather than masculine characteristics.

CHAPTER III

FAMILY LIFE—MARRIAGE AND THE BIRTH-RATE

For an English resident in France to become an intimate in the home of a French family is a rare enough occurrence, and for a visitor to attempt to discover anything as to French family life first hand is generally a quest doomed to failure. In the vast mass of the middle classes the habit of mind is to remain as far as possible on the estate of one's ancestors or in the place in which one is known. There is no wish to live in foreign lands; those who are obliged to do so are pitied, and foreigners who come to take up permanent residence in France are in most instances regarded as people who, for some regrettable reason, are obliged to live outside their native land. This idea prevents the foreigner from receiving a cordial welcome, and he generally labels the people of his adopted

land as inhospitable. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Belgians and Italians belonging to a common stock are assimilated with extreme rapidity into the great body of the nation.

The hospitality of the average French household of the middle classes is, owing to the need for great thrift, narrowed down to the necessarily limited circle of the family. No sooner is the aforetime stranger joined to a family by the tie of marriage than the doors of the homes of all the relations are thrown wide open to receive him. It is this custom which makes it so essential for the prospective parents-in-law to ascertain the antecedents, the status, and financial prospects of a proposed husband for their daughter. Should some disaster, monetary or otherwise, fall upon this new addition of the family, the blow is inflicted upon all the members and all the branches of that circle. Similar enquiries are put on foot by the parents of a son who is intending to ally himself to another family.

Wherever the family tie is given undue importance there is inevitably less willingness to entertain the stranger and to take the risks this wider sociality involves. So English people, with

IN THE PLACE DU THEÂTRE FRANÇAIS, PARIS.

Paris (which they do not really know) as the basis of their observations, are too ready to state with confidence that there is no real home life in France. It may be that there is less in the capital than in the rest of the country, but Paris is the least French portion of France. The English, or more accurately the British, quarter of Paris remains outside the closely guarded circles of Parisian family life, and large sections of the city live in water-tight compartments even as they do in London. What does the average middle-class family know of the French residents in London? Probably the number of those of the upper classes who are closely in touch with French residents of their own social rank is very small, and the humble French population of Soho and Pimlico live their hard-working lives almost as detached from the rest of the city as though they were on the other side of the Channel.

One of the most marked differences between the Anglo-Saxon and the French home is the fact that in the latter the place of the housemaid is to a very great extent taken by men. The sterner sex dust and sweep and polish as a matter of course. There is little restriction on the amount of noise made by the servants, male

and female, while they are about their work. It is quite usual to hear them laughing, talking, singing, and even shouting to one another, where in an English household there would scarcely be a sound above the quietest conversation drowned by the noise of the broom.

The ordinary house of the middle classes does not enjoy that periodical refurbishing and redecorating accepted as necessary north of the Channel. With a wife as keen as himself on living well within their joint income the French head of the family is not urged to put aside a certain annual sum for new curtains, carpets, chair and sofa covers, and such expensive items. The initial outlay on the home is generally considered to be almost sufficient for a lifetime if care is used in maintaining what has been purchased. It is not necessary to have entered many French homes to become familiar with the typical bedroom which is reflected faithfully enough in the average hotel. One essential feature of a bedroom as the Anglo-Saxon knows it is alone allowed to form a feature of the furnishing of the apartment. It is the bed, draped as a rule with elaborate curtains and coverings and surmounted by some form of canopy. A massive

feather-bed-like eiderdown, covering about one-half of the necessary area of the bed, reposes at the foot and leaves those unfamiliar with these nightmare pillows wondering if the people who use them are a practical race. The dressing-table and washstand are generally hard to find. If there is a *cabinet de toilette*, these essentials of a bedroom will be stowed away in what is often a roomy cupboard, and where the feature does not exist, both pieces of furniture will be so modest in dimensions and sufficiently well disguised to be almost unrecognisable at a casual glance. Conspicuously placed, however, will be an ample sofa and a writing-table not necessarily provided with adequate writing materials. Every effort is made to give the sleeping apartment as much the atmosphere of a reception-room as sofas and chairs and an absence of toilet appliances will allow, for when, right away in the fifteenth century, it became the custom for the sovereign to hold audiences in the bed-chamber the rest of French society imitated the royal example, until it became an established usage in *bourgeois* circles as much as in those of the class which enjoyed the direct influence of court fashions. Democratic and Republican

France has swept away the whole edifice of the monarchy, but unconsciously perpetuates in a most remarkable fashion the weakness of a sovereign to carry on the business of the day from his bed!

The average husband regards the *cabinet de toilette* as the peculiar possession of his wife, and would hesitate to enter that annexe to his bedroom unbidden. Possibly to those who have been brought up with this idea the English custom of providing a small dressing-room for the husband and allowing *madame* paramount rights over the whole bedroom may seem unaccountably odd.

Formality is generally the prevailing note of the reception-rooms. Comfortable chairs have only lately begun to make their appearance at all, and as a rule the middle-class household maintains a traditional severity in the arrangements of its drawing-room. Straight uninviting chairs and an absence of any indications of books, magazines or papers, or anything in the way of a needlework bag or a writing-table that is in regular use, deprive the room of any home-like individuality. The extreme economy exercised in the use of fuel makes the unnecessary lighting of

a fire a wanton extravagance. Commodities in Paris cost double or even more than double what they do in the British Isles, and in the country generally one-third more; the salaries of the civil and military officials, who form such a big section of the middle-class population, are considerably less than those enjoyed in England, and the incomes of the professional classes are as a rule smaller than those of the Englishman. Add to this the abnormally high rents of Paris and it will be understood that in the capital there is always need for the most rigid economy. *Madame* must keep a watchful eye on the household store of coal, not only to see that it is not wasted in her own fires, but to make sure that pilfering is not carried on by her servants. Where in England a fire is kept quietly smouldering, it will be raked out in France and relighted when required a few hours later. In this way a good deal of hardihood in the endurance of cold is developed, and contrivances in the way of stoves that burn fuel with extreme economy are much in use. This restraint in coal consumption reduces the quantity of carbon particles discharged into the atmosphere of French cities, and accounts to a great extent for the clearer air the inhabitants

enjoy, at the same time keeping the annual bill for coal and wood down to very modest proportions.

Economy must also be rigidly maintained in the purchase of food, and this is generally accomplished by discreet buying in the markets. A servant or a member of the household makes daily purchases in this manner, and the middleman's profits on the chief part of the food required are successfully avoided. In Paris the maid-of-all-work, who is generally the only servant employed in a modest flat, makes these daily purchases, out of which she obtains from those with whom she deals a commission of a *sou* in every *franc* expended. This is a universally recognised custom, but in addition there is a prevalent but altogether reprehensible practice, known as *faire danser l'anse du panier*. It is pure dishonesty, for the *bonne* puts down in the books a small overcharge on each item, and this with the marketman's *sou du franc* amounts to a considerable sum in the course of a year, often nearly equal to her wage. It is an interesting fact that Breton servants are generally quite guiltless of the overcharge system, for the people of Brittany are of much the same stock as the Welsh, concerning

whom there is a proverb for which the writer fails to find justification.

Déjeuner at 11.30 or 12 and dinner at 6.30 or 7 are the two essential meals of the day. Breakfast, served in the bedroom, consists of coffee or chocolate and small crisply baked rolls with butter and perhaps honey, while the Anglo-Saxon meal called tea is only an established feature among the upper classes, where English customs are extremely fashionable. The two chief meals both consist of at least four courses, with a cup of coffee added to give a finish to the whole. It might be thought absurd for those who are poor or living with great economy to begin their meals with an *hors-d'œuvre*, but Miss Betham-Edwards, whose knowledge of the French is sufficiently wide to be an authority, asserts that a careful housekeeper will give this preliminary course as an economy, for being great bread-eaters a little scrap of ham or sausage or herring eaten with several mouthfuls of bread will take the edge off the appetite and enable her to be less lavish with the other courses. Soup is very frequently made out of the water in which vegetables have been stewed with a suspicion of flavouring added, and the meat courses are provided

not from large joints, but from little scraps of meat which the French butcher produces in astonishing quantities from the same animal as his English neighbour handles in an entirely different and very much less economical fashion. These methods of cutting with a view to quantity rather than quality give much of the meat an unhappy toughness as though it were cut across or against the grain. Even the *bonne-à-tout-faire* will prefer to make a sacrifice in the quantity of food in each course of a meal if by so doing she can be quite sure of finishing with a cup of coffee.

The contrast of the mid-day meal, consisting of a chop and bread and cheese, supplied by the small provincial hotel to the commercial traveller in England, with that provided or obtainable in France, is astonishing. It is true that the knife and fork given for the first course must be retained for those that follow, but this little labour-saving custom can be overlooked in the presence of the savoury dishes that follow. Still more pronounced is the contrast when dinner-time arrives, for a very large majority of country hostelries in England will offer nothing more varied than a large plate of ham and eggs or cold meat, followed by bread and cheese and perhaps

EVENING IN THE PLACE D'IENA, PARIS.

apple or plum tart. It is the universal demand for appetising and well-cooked meals throughout France that ensures for the wayfarer wherever he goes an excellent dinner of several courses. It would, however, be unfair not to mention that a very great improvement has been taking place in the hotels of England in the last few years owing to the demand for well-cooked meals caused by motorists. The pre-eminence of France in this matter will cease to be remarkable before long if the present rapid progress is maintained. If one enquires still further into the reasons for French folk being dainty in the way their food is prepared, the explanation given by Mr. T. Rice Holmes that Celtic peoples as a rule have weak stomachs may perhaps be the correct answer.

If wall-papers are not often renewed in French houses, there is a delight in clean raiment which is most commendable. Clothes which are not washable are frequently sent to the cleaner, and as the most poorly paid *midinette* generally buys good materials for her clothes they last some time, and will stand cleaning and refurbishing better than the average clothes worn by her equals in England. This is typical of the inborn

thrift of the whole nation. Personal ablutions are, on the other hand, not so frequent or so thorough as among Anglo-Saxons, the supply of water for this purpose being generally very meagre and the basin for washing the face and hands awkwardly small. The itinerant bath is still to be found in country towns. It is brought to the house of those who desire to indulge in this luxury, and the water at the required temperature is provided also. The rinsing out of a bath with a little clean water after it has been used is not considered a sufficiently thorough method of satisfying individual fastidiousness, and a cotton covering large enough to entirely line the bath is therefore usually provided for each person. If one adds to this the difficulties confronting those for whom it is considered scarcely within the limits of propriety that they should be entirely unhampered by garments while in the bath, this simple operation of the toilet becomes a somewhat laborious undertaking !

It has been already stated how great is the reverence of the French for the family. It is certainly fostered by that wonderful institution the Family Council, a form of highly developed autonomy dating from the far-away days when

France was a Romanised province. The council is formed to look after the welfare of orphans and weak-minded and ne'er-do-weel minors. It consists of six members—three from among the relatives of each parent—and is presided over by a local *juge de paix*, who is attended by his clerk.

For those sons of wealthy parents who are developing into incorrigible idlers and a source of perpetual anxiety to their parents, owing too often to the excess of ill-judged kindness lavished on only sons by widowed mothers, there has been instituted in France what is known as *la maison paternelle*. If sent to this establishment the boy generally threatens to commit suicide or some other desperate act. He is at first placed in a solitary cell, where he is under the constant supervision and the special care of a " professor," who is appointed to deal with the particular case. By salutary talk, the most inflexible discipline, and regular studies, accompanied by a judicial kindliness, the refractory youths are almost invariably brought to their senses after a few months, and retain the warmest affection for the professors in after years.

As a rule the French child of almost every

class except the very lowest comes into the world with the prospect of some future inheritance of land or capital. The first infant in a very large proportion of families is both alpha and omega, and it is very exceptional for parents not to restrict their offspring to two or perhaps three, which is almost counted as a large family. For some time past census figures reveal the very remarkable fact that considerably over $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions of married couples are childless. Rather more than a quarter of the marriages result in one child; another quarter has two children, and 17 per cent are childless. Thus the duty of making up the deficiency of one large section and the total failure of another falls upon one-third of the married couples, and the latest returns show that this task is only just accomplished, the average number of births for each family hovering about the bed-rock figure 2. The year 1907 was altogether alarming, for the figures showed 19,890 more deaths than births for the twelve months, and it has been with considerable relief that the civilised world has seen the surplus turned over to the more healthy direction in subsequent years. With a population that does not increase there is less and less danger of overcrowding or

of extreme poverty, and therefore France houses her citizens better than Germany, England, or the United States. The individual child arrives in the world with his or her place more or less made in advance, and as the years pass by the son or daughter steps into the vacancy caused by the departure to "the land o' the leal" of a parent or relation. Such an even balance of vacancies and new arrivals tends to make livelihoods more stable in France than in the countries where the number of persons to the square mile is steadily increasing; it robs the whole nation of any desire to find homes outside the limits of the fatherland, and makes it practically impossible to make any real use of colonial possessions. Until civilised countries come to settle their differences without the senseless and futile appeals to brute force, by which they have unsuccessfully striven to do so in the past, this static condition of the population of France can only be looked upon as a calamity, but the growing strength of commercial ties is weakening bellicist prejudices and national antipathies every day, and the fact that the nations are now asking themselves whether any advantage is gained by fighting a civilised people shows that the world is on the

threshold of emancipation from what is most truly a great illusion.

Being so often the only child or one of two, the infant enters on life as the ruler of the household. The devoted parents, instead of following the golden maxim, which says " Apply the rod early enough and there will be no need to use it at all," give way to every passing mood or whim of their offspring, and insist that the nurse shall follow the same foolish course. If the infant cries it obviously needs something, and this must be supplied regardless of character-building. No wonder that *la maison paternelle* has been found a needful institution in the land! Maternal duties are not as a rule undertaken by the mother, and in a very large number of instances this is necessitated or at least encouraged by the large share in the maintenance of the household taken by the wife. In Parisian flats the *concierge*, owing to the smallness of his wage, is generally obliged to go out to work and depute his wife to undertake his duties during his absence. A mewling and puking infant under these conditions is a nuisance and must be brought up elsewhere.

In the average middle-class home the children are not given their meals in the nursery, but at

a very early age eat at the same table as their parents, and enjoy a varied menu including wine when English children are still having little besides milk puddings and mince.

Much more is concentrated into the earlier years of life in France than across the Channel. This is particularly so in regard to the *jeune fille*, who ceases to come under that title as soon as she has reached the age of twenty-five. The business of getting married must be achieved by that time, or else there is nothing for it but acquiescence in the popular judgment that the young girl has become an old girl—is on the shelf—and to preserve her self-respect must retire either to a convent or a conventual boarding-house. This custom is, like many others, as undesirably mediæval, gradually breaking down owing to the strongly intellectual training now given to the *jeune fille* at state *lycées*. No religious instruction is given in these schools, and the girls are therefore developing a new independence. A change, too, is taking place in the extremely secluded life that girls of the middle and upper classes have hitherto led. They are not invariably taken to school and fetched by a maid, and it is quite possible that this emancipation from continual supervision may lead to a

considerable modification in the present method of arranging marriages. The existing system of the choice of a husband for their daughter being made by the devoted parents has a striking similarity to the customs of the Far East. The young men the *jeune fille* is allowed to see are only those who are eminently eligible, that is, whose financial position is sound and whose family connections are not likely to cause anxiety when brought into the family circle by the union of the two young people.

To the French mind the idea of the betrothal of a man and a girl without the necessary means for immediately entering the state of matrimony is looked at with the most extreme disfavour. " Falling in love " might lead to most undesirable family ties, for each of the two parties concerned marries a family as well as a husband and wife respectively. No, the *mariage d'inclination* is a danger, and the young people must learn to fall in love during the honeymoon, a task the French girl seems to find less impossible than it sounds. The Anglo-Saxon method of a growing and entirely non-committal intimacy followed by a period of betrothal scarcely exists in France. Having little knowledge or experience of men,

THE CENTRE OF PARIS.

the girl accepts the suitor proposed by her parents because, as a rule, she has not much choice and the time is short before she has reached the old-maidish age of twenty-five. Then beyond this there is all the thrill and romance of some new and strange life in which she may succeed in falling desperately in love with her husband. If not, the situation has occurred before, and the average married woman seems to find some solace in other interests; there will perhaps be a son or a daughter, or possibly both, and on them it will be easy for her to expend her pent-up feelings of love, and later on there will perchance come what is an ideal with the average Frenchwoman—the satisfaction of being a grandmother.

During the short time between the formal acceptance of her proposed husband and the wedding ceremony the affianced pair are not as a rule allowed to be together alone. No doubt in many instances this harsh ruling of long-established custom is broken through, but it would be done surreptitiously unless the parties concerned were exceptionally emancipated from the great body of French tradition. It is also quite unusual for the mother to speak of love

when discussing with her daughter a man who has offered himself as a husband; it is merely understood that he is pleased with the girl's general appearance and not dissatisfied with her *dot*.

Strict Roman Catholics do not recognise the civil contract beyond going through the required legal ceremony. The banns, stating several personal particulars regarding the parents as well as the contracting parties, are put up at the *mairie* ten days before the marriage can be performed. If the betrothed pair have not reached the age of thirty, they must have the consent of their parents, but over twenty-one they are able to obtain that consent through a legal process at the office of a certified notary. Even extreme action of this character does not entail total loss of a certain portion of the parental inheritance, for the Civil Code does not permit parents to leave more than a proportion to strangers. One-half must fall to the children's share. Quite recently an example of the small satisfaction this may cause to the recipients came to light. An aged grandparent's estate produced a sum of 100 francs, to be divided equally between four legatees. The legal expenses entailed in certifying the status of each party and other matters

ran up to such a large sum that the surplus divisible was barely 20 francs.

On the appointed day the wedding party assembles at the *mairie*, where the mayor, after reading to the couple that portion of the Civil Code relating to the duties of the married state, hears their declaration and the permission of the parents, after which both parties exchange wedding rings and are pronounced man and wife. The register having been signed, first by the wife and then by the husband, the civil ceremony is complete, and in Republican society the wedded pair as a rule trouble themselves not at all about the attitude of the Church to the contract they have made. Many, however, as already stated, do not regard this as the real wedding, and the bride and bridegroom remain apart until the next day, or perhaps two or three days later, when the religious ceremony is performed in a church. There the wedding rings are blessed before being put on, and the completion of the religious ceremony is marked by the presentation of a tray for offerings. One cannot be very long in a French church without this opportunity presenting itself. The writer has vivid recollections of his almost precipitate retreat from the

Madeleine after he had been present for a short time at a service in that classic church on the occasion of his first visit to Paris. His memory recalls how cheerfully he paid for his seat for the first time, how he produced another coin when, with a charming smile, a young woman applied for a second alms, and how, when a third bag was placed before him with the words *pour les pauvres*, he found a sou, and in a few moments had, with a sigh of relief, exchanged the Gregorian solemnities of the great church for the rattle and stir of the *Boulevard des Capucines*.

But to return to the wedding ceremony. The young couple having been now made man and wife in the sight of Church as well as the State, they start on their voyage together into the unknown, to discover one another and, if possible, after what answers to a time of courting, to fall in love with each other. Should this time of exploration into each other's characters and temperaments, likes and dislikes, prove entirely unsatisfactory, it becomes a matter of acute interest to enquire how the knot may be loosened or untied. Until 1883 divorce was not legal, but since that year of emancipation the Civil Code permits it for several reasons. These are

divided under three headings: first, unfaithfulness or desertion on either side; second, acts of violence and *injures graves*, which covers the great area of incompatibility of temperament; and third, penal sentences passed on the man or woman. It is fairly obvious that this wide doorway will permit the entrance of a great majority of those who wish for freedom from an ill-chosen partner, and the result has been a steady increase in the number of divorces in recent years. The figures were 10,573 in 1906 and 13,049 in 1910. Even the Church of Rome will allow the marriage tie to be severed under certain conditions not perhaps open to a poor couple.

There can be little doubt that divorce in France is facilitated by the fact that the wife has in most cases an independent source of income, and is therefore economically on her feet in the event of a termination of her wedded state. She is, generally speaking, looked upon with less favour as a divorced woman than is a man. No doubt this is due to slow-dying prejudice in favour of the man in these circumstances. Changes are, however, coming with such accelerating speed in these matters that anything written to-day is more or less out of date by the time it is printed.

To come back to the normal condition of married persons in France, there is no doubt that, surprising as it may seem, the *jeune fille* does in a very large majority of cases settle down contentedly with the husband chosen by her parents. She blossoms with the speed of an Indian juggler's magic plant into a woman of affairs, and in a very short time is taken into the fullest confidence in monetary matters by her husband. Many develop such a capacity for business that they rapidly out-distance their men folk in such matters, and if, as is very often the case in middle-class life, they are obliged to contribute towards the family budget, their earnings will frequently exceed those of the easy-going husband. Any one at all intimate with France knows the keenness and capacity of the woman in business, whether as a shopkeeper, a manageress, or a hotel proprietor. They can drive a hard bargain and are less easy to deal with than men, although the writer is inclined to think that he has met quite as many men as women who are difficult or unpleasant in a financial matter.

In spite of this frequently existing superior ability in dealing with money matters, a wife must obtain her husband's written consent before she

touches her capital! And further than this, the Civil Code requires that the husband must make good any deficiency from his wife's original *dot* should he wish to obtain a divorce, notwithstanding the fact that the diminution had taken place with her consent; and it is a curious and interesting fact that in the case of disagreement the husband finds the Code ignores the perchance superior wisdom of the wife.

As a rule it is *madame* who rules the household, while "*mon mari*" is a worshipper who obeys willingly, both being the slaves of their child or children, to whom within the strict boundaries of *comme il faut* nothing must be denied. How, with such spoiling as children, the French man and woman grow up to do their share in the world's work it is hard to understand. Possibly the dislike evinced by the race as a whole to undertake an adventurous career entailing risk, the lack of some of the luxuries which have been long enjoyed, and an element of uncertainty may be in part ascribed to the lack of discipline in the nursery. An explanation for this characteristic might be given by merely pointing to the figures of population, which, as just mentioned, remain almost stationary, and do not provide that driving force

which sends other peoples out into new lands in great numbers; but this condition of a static population has been brought about voluntarily by the people themselves, through their desire to be sure of a safe and prearranged career for their offspring. And so it is the family life of the French, the predominance of the weaker partner, and the craving after those conditions of existence generally regarded as feminine, which result in a weakening of France as a colonising nation, and often cause misgivings in the minds of those who are her well-wishers.

THE MARKET PLACE AND CATHEDRAL AT ABBEVILLE.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE FRENCH GOVERN THEMSELVES

It may be broadly stated that the French people are content to be governed and to feel a controlling authority in operation in all departments of their lives. This results in a silent acquiescence under long-endured grievances which could easily be redressed by a little ventilation of public opinion. Where the Anglo-Saxon uses his newspapers to make known his attitude towards various matters requiring new legislation, where he takes advantage of an election, parliamentary or municipal, to obtain undertakings from candidates, the average Frenchman will neither write nor speak, so that editors and deputies, and the great public as well, remain generally ignorant of a widespread area of smouldering resentment. Like the burning coal-beds not unfrequently discovered in Central Europe, the underground

combustion, which has perhaps been continuing for many years, is only brought to light by accident.

When legislation takes place on some important economic issue it will be framed, as a rule, on abstract lines disregarding the past, and in many ways ignoring general convenience. There is in this way little evolution in the growth of the French constitution, and an old law may exist unmodified so long that when change comes it is so out of date that it must be swept away. The Revolution cut down to the roots the rotten tree of unregenerate feudalism, and planted in its place a sapling which has to conform to the essential requirements of progress; it must be trimmed and lopped, and must put forth new growth in order that it too, in the effluxion of time, may not become as unsuited to modern needs as its predecessor.

In August 1789 the first Republican Parliament wrote down certain cardinal matters relating to the welfare and freedom of the individual and called it the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. Thirteen years before this the United States of North America had drawn up their Declaration of Independence,

and no doubt this inspired those who framed the more compactly worded document. In their seventeen brief articles French Republicans, in an age when ideas of freedom had fertilised both sides of the Atlantic, boldly and simply stated their new-born beliefs, commencing with the assertion that "All men are born and remain free and have equal rights." In *Article 2* they stated that "the object of all political groupings is the preservation of the natural, inalienable, and sacred rights of man," those rights being "liberty, property, security, and the right to resist oppression." Although possessing the last-mentioned power, it has already been pointed out that the people are slow to make use of it. The nation likewise fails to carry out the spirit of *Article 9*, which says, "As a man is deemed innocent until he shall have been declared guilty should it be necessary to arrest him no rigour that is not essential for the securing of his person shall be tolerated by the law." In the final—the 17th—Article there is food for thought for the Socialist, for it is there stated that property is "an inviolable and sacred right," followed by the qualifying sentence, "No man may be deprived of it, unless public interest demand it evidently

and according to the Law, provided, moreover, that a fair indemnity be first paid to him." Even the most civilised of peoples are still a good deal short of that high degree of wisdom and goodness which will make every man competent and willing to be his brother's keeper, and it is therefore probable that for some time to come *Article 17* will stand as a living part of the French Constitution. It is interesting to remember that in the Declaration of 1789 the right of Habeas Corpus was first established in France, while it had been on the statute book of England for over a century, and would have been there some time before but for repeated rejections by the House of Lords.

Upon the splendid substructure of the Declaration of the Rights of Man the first French Constitution was reared. It was framed with care, took two years in the making, and was finally accepted by Louis in 1791. Since then there have been many constitutions, but, omitting the Napoleonic interlude, the principles of the Declaration show themselves with triumphant ascendency as the foundation of each reconstruction. Like all written constitutions, modifications are frequently found necessary. There

is none of the elasticity of the unwritten constitution which exists only in the land of the people who are said to have a genius for governing themselves, and perhaps it is that endowment with the capacity for self-government which makes the nebulous character of the British Constitution so valuable. It is true that a very great majority of well-educated British people could not give any clear idea of the nature of the constitution of their country, and when any constitutional point arises only a handful of experts can state how far the precedents of the past, by which the constitution is modified, affect the immediate issue; and yet there would be a considerable feeling of alarm if it were seriously proposed to make the whole situation plain by producing a modern written constitution, however much based on all that has gone before.

Britons, as a rule, do not even trouble to acquaint themselves with the survival of many ancient royal prerogatives. Walter Bagehot[1] puts into one pregnant paragraph what Queen Victoria could do without consulting Parliament. "Not to mention other things," he writes, "she

[1] *The English Constitution*, Introduction to 1872 Edition.

could disband the army (by law she cannot engage more than a certain number of men, but she is not obliged to engage any men); she could dismiss all the officers, from the General Commanding-in-Chief downwards; she could dismiss all the sailors too; she could sell off all our ships of war and all our naval stores; she could make a peace by the sacrifice of Cornwall, and begin a war for the conquest of Brittany. She could make every citizen in the United Kingdom, male or female, a peer; she could make every parish in the United Kingdom a 'university'; she could dismiss most of the civil servants; she could pardon all offenders." The present sovereign could do the same, but safeguards in the form of impeachment of Ministers and change of a Ministry preserve the country from proceedings of this nature; but in a country with a written constitution such legacies from the days when the head of the State was a military dictator exist no longer.

While the British law-makers and administrators bear on their backs the whole weight of centuries of laborious constitution-building, the French work with the light equipment of a constitution framed in 1875, everything prior to

that date being null and void.[1] No French politician is therefore required at any time to be aware of a usage of the reign of Louis XI., or any curtailment of the royal authority which may have taken place when Philippe Auguste occupied the throne. The throne itself has ceased to exist since the fall of Napoleon III. in 1870, and France since that year has remained under its third Republic.

The laws passed in 1875 provide that the legislative power shall be in the hands of two assemblies—the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate—and the executive in those of an elected President and the Ministry. The Upper House or Senate is composed of 300 members, now entirely elected by the Departments or Senate. They must be over forty years of age. In England, if the Prime Minister is a commoner he can only go into the Upper House as a listener, and all the Cabinet are under the same restriction, but in France Ministers can sit in both Chambers and can speak in either place as occasion requires or the spirit moves. Voting, however, is restricted to the Chamber to which the Minister belongs. One is inclined to wonder whether eloquence

[1] The Constitution was slightly revised in 1879 and 1884.

that stirs the hearts and sways the voting in the British House of Commons would be as productive if addressed to the hereditary body. There is no separate Minister for the Post Office, that office being included in the Ministry of Commerce, and there are only twelve Ministers against the twenty or twenty-one of the British Cabinet. The Ministry of Labour and Public Thrift appears almost quaint to the much less thrifty people of England.

The Lower Chamber consists of 584 deputies, and is elected every four years by universal suffrage. On coming of age, every citizen not in military service and having a residential qualification of six months may exercise the franchise. Women have not yet achieved the right to vote. Perhaps the majority of French married women exercise already as much power as they care to possess, for even peasant women are quite familiar with the method of voting through their docile husbands. Only in 1897 were women entitled by law to act as witnesses in civil transactions; prior to that date a woman came under the same category as a minor or the insane!

That the Frenchwoman is beginning to wake

up to the possibilities of her twentieth-century emancipation is shown in a hundred directions. In January 1913 a woman came forward as a candidate for the French presidential chair, the first in the history of the Republic. When questioned as to the seriousness of her purpose she asked, "And why not a woman head of the State? People may regard it as a joke; but what about Catherine the Great and Queen Victoria?" When one remembers, too, the astonishing business capacity of the average Frenchwoman, one is inclined to echo the question, "Why not?" There are already more than a dozen women barristers in Paris, besides seventy doctors, eighteen dentists, ten oculists, and six chemists! Women, too, have for many years occupied on the railways of France positions which are exclusively in the hands of the stronger sex in England. Who is not familiar with the hard-faced woman who with a horn at her lips controls the level crossings?

The only restriction among French citizens to becoming President is that which rules out any member of a royal family which has reigned in France. He is elected for seven years and the salary is £48,000 a year, one half of which is

received as salary, the other being for travelling and official expenses connected with office. This sum appears generous when contrasted with the £5000 paid to the British First Lord of the Treasury and his unpaid services as Prime Minister of the Crown. The President appoints all the Ministers and heads of the civil and military departments. He declares war with the consent of both Houses, and a Minister countersigns every act.

The national desire for security prompts the men folk of a large proportion of the upper middle classes to aim towards the pleasantly safe pigeonholes in the State dovecot. In order to attain these places of refuge from commercial or professional struggle, every public official who has reached the desired haven of his ambition, or at least one of the assured steps that will surely lead him thither, is the subject of endless demands for aid in the same direction from his remotest relatives and acquaintances. Upon this system of *pistonnage* the aspirant to an official position must lean, for if he does not the crowd ready to fill each vacancy will all have superior chances on account of the word here and there spoken on their behalf in the right quarter. *Pistonnage*

does not, however, apply to those who aspire to a seat in either the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies, where a salary of 15,000 fr. a year and free travelling relieves the representative of financial anxiety, so long as he is devoting his time to his country's service.

By direct and semi-direct taxation about £25,000,000 was produced in 1912. These taxes include a levy on windows and doors, varying according to the density of the population, the more closely inhabited areas paying more than the less populous. There is a tax on land not built upon, assessed in accordance with its net yearly revenue based on the register of property drawn up in the earlier half of last century and kept up to date. The Building tax is 3.2 per cent on the rental value, and is paid by the owner. The Personal tax places a fixed capitation on every citizen, varying from 1s. 3d. to 3s. 9d. according to the department. The Habitation tax is paid by every one occupying a house or apartments in proportion to the rent. The Trade License tax embraces all trades, and consists of a fixed duty levied on the extent of business as revealed by the number of employés, and population, and the locality, and so on, and

also an assessment on the letting value of the premises.

By indirect taxation a little over £100,000,000 was raised in 1912. The sum was realised by stamps of all sorts (excluding postage), by registration duties on the transfer of property in business ways and general changes of ownership, and by customs, including a tax on Stock Exchange transactions, a tax of 4 per cent on dividends from stocks and shares, taxes on alcohol, wine, beer, cider, and alcoholic liquors generally, on home-produced salt and sugar, and on railway passenger and goods traffic. The State monopolies of tobacco, matches, and gunpowder produced the large sum of £38,000,000, but even this did not meet the charges for interest on the National Debt, which were about 51½ millions, the accumulated sum for which this is required being (1912) £1,301,718,302. This is almost double as great as the British national indebtedness.

Over each of the 86 Departments is a prefect chosen by the Minister of the Interior, and through him the minor officials are kept in touch with the Government. The arrondissement and the canton are administrative divisions into

which each Department is divided, each canton including about a dozen communes. The commune is controlled by the mayor, who is chief magistrate and, as in England, is the head of the municipal body. According to the size of the commune deputy mayors are elected. The great city of Lyons requires 17 of these officials, and when one remembers that the presence of the mayor or a deputy mayor is required at every marriage in order that it may become legal, the number does not seem excessive.

Every canton has its *juge de paix*, who is in a general sense a police court judge. He tries small cases, but his responsibilities are carefully limited, and he may not inflict a fine exceeding 200 francs. Any offence requiring a heavier hand must go up to the *Tribunal correctionnel de l'arrondissement* or the court of *Première Instance*. The *juge de paix* wears a tall hat encircled with a broad silver band, and although, as a rule, a man who has received a fairly good education, his salary averages between £120 and £160 per annum. On such an income there is no opportunity for pretentious living! The wife of a *juge de paix* cannot, as a rule, afford to keep a nursemaid, and one maid-of-all-work is as much

as the *ménage* can afford to maintain. Nevertheless the position is an honourable one, there is a pension at sixty years, and the hours of labour are, to the man with a sense of humour, often brightened by the absurdity of the cases that are brought into court. There is generally much fun for the court in the frequent cases of *diffamation*, in which citizens drag one another into the presence of the *juge de paix* for calling each other names. The court allows noisy altercation in a fashion unknown in England, and the task of the magistrate is, to the Anglo-Saxon mind, almost beyond belief. The breezy outpourings of plaintiff and defendant are ended with the *juge de paix's* words, "You can retire," and, as a rule, some sound and friendly advice has been offered to the unneighbourly neighbours. A very considerable amount of litigation arises through the possession of land or houses, for the thriftiness of the French has always inclined the people towards the ownership of their farms or the land they till. In the old days before the Revolution, all such disputes came before courts in which the unprivileged and poor might be fairly sure of losing the day. The scandal of those venal courts was so great that nothing

short of a clean sweep could effectually rid the land of the curse they inflicted, and the overthrow of the monarchy was followed by the establishment of administrators of justice who were servants of the State and none other.

The correctional courts mentioned deal with the graver offences which are outside the ambit of the *juge de paix*. As a rule there are three judges and no jury. These courts are empowered to inflict punishment up to imprisonment for five years. The Courts of Assize are held every three months in each Department. They are presided over by a councillor of the Court of Appeal with two assistants and a jury of twelve, but a unanimous verdict is not required, the fate of the accused hanging on a majority only. Another feature of these courts is the *juge d'instruction's* secret preliminary investigation into each case.

Superior to the Courts of Assize are those of Appeal and the *Cour de Cassation*, which became so well known to the English public during the famous trial of Dreyfus. This court, as its name implies, can abrogate the ruling of any other tribunal, with the exception of the administrative courts. This high authority decides on matters

of legal principle or whether the court from which appeal has been made was competent to make the decision in question. It does not concern itself primarily with the facts of the case, and if it should annul any finding the case is sent to a fresh hearing of a court of the same authority.

The administrative police, or *gardiens de la paix*, are approximately equivalent to British police constables, and must not be confused with the *gendarmerie*, which is a military body carrying out civil duties in times of peace. The *gendarmerie* are recruited from the army, there being one legion in each army corps district. Their strength is roughly 22,000 men, equally divided between cavalry and infantry. In Paris there is a separate force known as the *Garde républicaine*, which carries out police duties very much the same as the *gendarmerie* in the Departments. They number about 3000, of whom 800 are mounted. The French prison system was in a very antiquated state in 1874, when a commission on prison discipline issued its report in favour of cellular confinements. Prisons were therefore reconstructed, and after many years had elapsed some of the older ones were demolished, the prisoners thereafter being removed from the

FIVE O'CLOCK TEA IN PARIS.

disadvantages they encountered in association. The system of isolation required the construction of a huge new prison at Fresnes-les-Rungis. It contains 1500 cells, and when it was completed in 1898 the historic Paris prisons of Grande-Roquette, St. Pélagie, and Mazas were swept away.

Taken as a whole, one can scarcely endorse Taine's utterance that modern France is the work of Napoleon. The present organisation of the nation is undoubtedly due to the masterly brain and tireless energy of Napoleon, but the national characteristics of the French people have shown little change. The existence of a constitution, the even-handed administration of justice, and the opening of the highest offices in the State to the citizen of the humblest origin, do not yet seem to have affected the nature of the people. Laughter, tears, and anger are still near the surface; love of adventure in thought, word, and deed does not yet lead the French into the acquisition of the solid advantages their enterprise would bring did they only persevere on the lines of their initial enterprise. In spite of the almost frantic desire for liberty there is no doubt that the French tamely submit

to a régime which Englishmen would find in some matters quite intolerable. If suspicion of smuggling falls upon a house the police can make domiciliary visits of a quite arbitrary character. The Civil Code, too, must be regarded as oppressive so long as it retains its attitude of looking upon the untried person as guilty until such time as his trial establishes his innocence, and the Anglo-Saxon mind is revolted at the practice of endeavouring to extort a confession from a prisoner. The Napoleonic mould did not alter these qualities, and even in the matter of religious tolerance the French have still much to learn.

CHAPTER V

ON EDUCATION AND RELIGION

THE annual sum of 4250 francs (£170) was considered by Napoleon—in so far as he had opportunity for considering the subject—a sufficient amount of money to devote directly to the education of the people! But the rulers of States a brief century ago were, as a whole, inclined to leave educational matters in clerical hands, and the nineteenth century will stand out in the world's history as the dawn of State responsibility in regard to the education of the people.

At the Restoration in 1814 more than twelve times as great a sum as that expended by Napoleon was being devoted to education, and the amount rose to 3,000,000 francs in 1830, to 12,000,000 during the Second Empire, and to 160,000,000 under the Third Republic. To the last sum

must be added another 100,000,000 francs (excluding the money devoted to the erection of schools) spent by the municipalities and communes, making a total of about £11,400,000. In 1912 the State alone was spending about £12,000,000 on national education.

At the head of this great spending department of the State is the Minister of Public Instruction. He controls not only the whole of the primary schools, but to some extent the entire educational machinery of the country, private schools being subjected to State inspection and supervision. Between 1901 and 1907 some 3000 public clerical schools, and more than 13,000 private clerical schools, were suppressed by law. The law passed in 1904 required that all schools controlled by religious bodies should be closed within the next ten years, which period is just about to elapse. Since the State awoke to its responsibilities in educational matters, it has taken roughly a century finally to extinguish clerical control. The schools are divided into the three grades of Primary, Secondary, and Higher, and the State admits into any of these pupils of any grade of society. In the rooms of *lycée* or college the classes meet in a truly democratic fashion.

The college, which is controlled by the commune under the State, is considered inferior to the *lycée*, which is entirely in the hands of the central authority. While the primary schools are compulsory and gratuitous between the ages of six and thirteen, the secondary schools charge small fees ranging from £2 a year up to £16. But parents with bright children can often avoid this expenditure through the lavish system of scholarships offered by the State.

Lycées were first established for girls in 1880, and there are now several in existence, one of them having 700 students. The hours of the classes are from 8.30 to 11.30, and from 1.30 to 3.30, and the aim has been to run them on the same lines as those of the boys. Since clericalism was removed from the education of girls, there has no doubt been a very considerable change in the scholastic environment of the *jeune fille*, but until a long period has elapsed it will be difficult for any but those in the closest touch with educational life in France to point out how far the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or *vice versa*. The lay schoolmistress may be in essentials as religiously-minded as any convent-trained type of woman. Her influence

on her pupils may produce as moral and as religious types of women in the coming generation as those of the immediate past, but in such a change in the training of the girls of a race not fond of moral discipline who can foresee the results ?

The general tendency of the training given in the *lycée* has been towards the suppression of originality. There seems to have grown up in the mind of the authorities an impression that the only means of keeping the youth of France under proper control is by holding them down with an iron grip, not merely during the hours of work but during recreation also. This may have been necessitated by a certain lack of discipline in the earliest years of life, young children being allowed to have their own way to an altogether undesirable extent. As soon as they are old enough the boys, having, as a rule, begun to be a source of much trouble in the home, are sent to school. If their parents are able to afford the fees, the gates of the *lycée* soon close upon their days of wilfulness and disobedience. In place of the home life and the feminine influence with which they have been familiar, they are confronted with a discipline of semi-military

severity. Games are not allowed, and in the hours of recreation in walled playgrounds of a generally forbidding order, walking and talking alone are permitted. Here, as in the class-room, the boys are perpetually under the eyes of the *pion*, whose duties are restricted entirely to the maintenance of order. Owing to suppression in natural directions, it is not surprising if the minds of the boys should turn into the unhealthy directions of intrigue and pernicious literature.

M. Demolins, who a few years ago tried the experiment of running his school on English lines, has found the results excellent. So greatly appreciated are his efforts to abolish the bad features of the *lycée* that he is unable to meet the demand on the capacity of his buildings. He is of opinion that the Anglo-Saxon is superior to the French because of the better training given at school, discouragement of initiative and suppression of independence being the chief features of the schools of his own country, while the Anglo-Saxon allows boys a freedom which develops self-reliance and individuality.

"Every one knows our dreadful college," writes M. Demolins, "with its much too long classes and studies, its recreations far too short

and without exercise, its prison walks a monotonous going and coming between high heart-breaking walls, and then every Sunday and Thursday the military promenade in rank, the exercise of old men, not of youth."

The boarder at the *lycée*, of course, feels the harshness of the régime to a degree that the day-boy never experiences, home hours mitigating the severity of the long working day.

As a whole, it may be said that the ideal of the educational system has been intellectuality rather than that of character building, and in the former France is superior to England, the system producing a higher average of intellectual capacity. If both countries could take to themselves the strong features that each possesses it would be very materially to their advantage. Changes in the right direction are already taking place in France. It is quite probable that the *pion* will be suppressed before long, and cricket, football, and other manly and health-giving games are beginning to take the place of the old man's stroll under supervision. The fact that the Boy Scout is appearing all over France seems to herald the dawn of a growing sturdiness and manliness in the youth of the nation. At the

CHILDREN OF PARIS IN THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS.

present day the average boy has an undoubtedly girlish softness in his dress and general appearance. He wears sailor suits at an age which would produce laughter amongst Anglo-Saxon boys. He appears in white socks for several years longer than the English boy would tolerate, and his thinly-soled boots suggest the promenade rather than any form of strenuous game. His clothes do not appear to have been made for any hard wear, and as a rule the knickerbockers of soft thin grey material so generally to be seen are unfit for any rough use whatever. Even the large black leather portfolios in which books and papers are carried to and from school seem to receive as careful handling as though they belonged to a Government official rather than that most destructive of creatures—the schoolboy. In England one is familiar with the sight of four or five books dangling at the end of the strap which secures them, enabling the owner to convert his home-work into a handy weapon of offence, but the soft leather case of French boys and girls, which must be carefully carried under one arm, offers no such fascinating by-purpose.

If parents keep their boys in socks for a longer period than seems rational to the Anglo-

Saxon, they frequently go farther with their girls, who often enough may be seen with bare legs until they are nearly as tall as their mothers.

Very much stress is laid on the examinations, which commence at the age of fifteen or sixteen, when the *lycée* and college training terminates. The system since 1902 has consisted of a period of seven years divided into two parts. At the expiry of the first, which consists of four years, the pupil can choose one of four courses. The first is Latin and Greek, the second Latin and sciences, the third Latin and modern languages, and the fourth sciences and modern languages. Having passed three years on one of these courses, he should be ready for the two examinations by which he can obtain the degree known as the *Baccalauréat de l'enseignement.* This is the outer gateway to be passed through before the scholar can enter the citadels of any of the great professions, such as law, letters, medicine, or Protestant theology.

The State provides the higher education in its universities and in its specialised higher schools, and since 1875 private individuals and bodies, so long as they are not clerical, have been permitted to take part in the advanced educa-

LE PUY-EN-VELAY IN THE AUVERGNE COUNTRY.

tional work of the country, but the State faculties alone have the power to confer degrees. The five classes of faculties associated with the various universities confer degrees in law, science, medicine, letters, and Protestant theology.

The keystone of the arch of learning in France is the *Institut de France.* It embodies the five great academies of science and literature, but omits that of medicine, which stands apart.

In England some social importance attaches to a man on account of his having been educated at Eton or Harrow and having afterwards taken a degree at one of the two mother universities, irrespective of his having shown himself an indifferent scholar, but south of the Channel the scene of a man's education counts for naught in later life. The moral and social sides of the English system would seem to have crowded out to a great extent the intellectual side, which, with the essentially practical people of France, forms the whole structure. From the teacher in the primary school to the heads of the universities no effort is made to influence character: "As soon as the student leaves the lecture hall he is free to return to the niche he has constituted for himself, to its probable triviality and its

possible grossness, or to the vulgar pleasures of the town. . . . We lose the advantage of that peculiar monastic, thoughtful life which is offered to the young Englishman." [1]

An almost childlike simplicity seems to be the keynote of the religion of that portion of the French people which still adheres to the observances of the Roman Church. The nation, until recent years, professed the Catholic faith and worshipped the Virgin as the mother of the Saviour of the world. In her honour, and to keep her presence ever in mind, to envisage her to mortal eyes, they erected statues and placed little figures at street-corners, by the road-side, and upon the altars of churches, and these are still objects of veneration among the people. One of the largest and most imposing representations of the Virgin is Notre Dame de France, a colossal figure cast from guns captured in the Crimean War, which is erected on the summit of the basaltic cliff which towers above the ancient town of Le Puy-en-Velay (Haute Loire). The figure is so gigantic—it stands forth gilded by the rising or the setting sun high above one's head, even when standing on the top of the rock

[1] W. L. George.

upon which it has been erected—that one can scarce forbear to look upon it without some admiration, irrespective of its merits as a work of art. The features are of a sweet and simple beauty, although of a stereotyped order, and even to those whose religious ideas do not lean in the direction of the veneration of representations of deities it is easy to see how a simple peasant, trained in the religious system which erects such images, can fall into the attitude of prayer by merely looking on such an achievement. . . . Gazing at the figure standing high in the midst of an amphitheatre of picturesque mountains, one feels some explanation for the attitude of the religious towards the immense figure; . . . and then one turns away to descend from the rock, and passing behind the pedestal of the effigy one observes a door, and above it a notice to the effect that on payment of ten centimes one may ascend within the *Vierge*, and when the maximum fee has been paid one may actually place oneself within the head and gaze out upon an immense panorama from a position of wonderful novelty. . . . Where is the vision, where the sense of fitness, where any atmosphere of sanctity? Does the incongruity of such an arrangement strike no one

among the religiously-minded people who visit Le Puy ?

It would appear that the French prefer to have all that is outward in their religion as much a part of their daily lives as any other objects of common use. Thus the coverings of the inner doors of a French church are almost invariably worn into holes or discoloured with the frequent handling of those who every day spend a few minutes in the incense-laden atmosphere of their parish church. The floors are dirty with the constant coming and going from the streets, and the need for doormats does not appear to be observed. On week-days, apart from the clergy, it is exceptional to see a man in a church unless he is there in some official capacity. One will find men carrying out repairs, and it does not seem to occur to them to remove their hats; one will see them as tourists with guide-books in their hands, or, as at St. Denis in the suburbs of Paris, a man in uniform will conduct visitors through the choir and crypt, and he too finds it unnecessary to uncover his head; but one goes far to find any other than women and children kneeling in prayer before the altars or stations of the cross on any other

LA ROCHE, A VILLAGE OF HAUTE SAVOIE.

day than Sunday. It is the women whose religious needs bring them into places of worship in the midst of the working hours of the week-day, men rarely coming unless their steps are directed thither for a wedding or a funeral. And on Sundays few churches would be required if the women ceased to attend.

Funerals have not yet lost their impressive trappings as is the case in England, where even the poor are beginning to find it less a necessity to have the hearse drawn by horses adorned with immense black plumes and long black cloths coming down almost to the ground. In France these things are still much in evidence, and imposing black and purple hangings studded with immense silver tear-drops are put up in the church if the estate or the relatives of the deceased can afford such melancholy splendour. Before leaving the church after the funeral service, friends and relatives pass one by one to the bier, and there each takes a crucifix and makes the sign of the cross.

The interior of a French church is, as a rule, so dark and shadowy that the clusters of candles burning before the shrines sparkle brilliantly in the cavernous gloom of its apsidal chapels,

casting an uncertain and mystic light on pictures and effigies of saints and apostles, on shining objects of silver and gold, and on gaudy ornament and tinsel. Looming out of the obscurity, the ghostly representation of the crucified Christ is faintly illuminated; a few inky figures are grouped before the altars, their blackness relieved only by the white caps of the peasants—for it is the custom for women to wear black when they go to church; the air is heavy with incense, and one feels that superficial glamour which makes its strong appeal to those who find satisfaction in the mainly sensuous emotions caused by these surroundings. When an organ pours forth its sonorous and mellow notes and men's voices chant Gregorian music before the brilliantly lighted altar sparkling with golden ornament, when the solemn Latin liturgy is recited and the consecrated elements are raised by the priest, the average religious requirements of the French would seem to be satisfied. Those who do not find any satisfaction in watching and listening to these offices of the Roman Church as a rule drop into a state of agnosticism, if not of complete irreligion. To be logical one must do so, and a growing majority of Frenchmen seem to find no other course

unless they belong to the comparatively small body of Protestants or the Jewish communities.[1] There can be no doubt at all that the Roman Church has lost its hold on a vast proportion of its adherents, and those who are still numbered among the "faithful" are every year shrinking in numbers.

"French Protestants," writes Mr. W. L. George,[2] "and French Jews are as devout, as clean-living, as spiritually minded as our most enlightened Churchmen and Nonconformists; a visit to any Parisian synagogue or to the Oratory will demonstrate in a moment that the French have not forgotten how to pray. The congregations are as large as ever they were, and they contain as great a proportion of men as in England." And he adds: "This distinction of sex must everywhere be made, and particularly in France, where Roman Catholicism flaunts a sumptuous aestheticism, voluptuous and worldly, capable of appealing both to the refined and to the sensuous." Mr. George believes that French Catholics have not turned against Christ, but against the ministers of the Christian religion in

[1] The Protestants number about 600,000, the Jews 70,000, and the nominal Catholics 39,000,000.

[2] *France in the Twentieth Century*—an admirable work.

his land because they have been discovered to be unfaithful servants. It is his belief that the Church is dying—"dying hard but surely"; and who can quarrel with his statement that the people have turned their backs on its ministers, that they are on the threshold of agnosticism, and that the Church is putting forth no hand to stay them? The next two or three generations can scarcely fail to witness the death by atrophy of the Roman faith in France; but the French are not an irreligious people, and perhaps a wider faith may spring up from the ashes of the creed which is so fast growing cold.

One might compare religious systems to the unresponsive edifices in which public worship is conducted, for they seem equally incapable of spontaneous adaptability to the needs of the people, and only the stress and labour of the laity ever produces any adaptation to the changing needs of those for whom the structure exists.

Because the accumulated resentment of the French people as a whole against the shortcomings of their national Church has resulted in a complete divorce from the State, and because the clergy have rebelled against the laws which have recently been passed, and have therefore become

in a certain sense outlaws—servants, as it were, of a discredited section of the community—it has been easy for superficial observers to come to the conclusion that the French nation has virtually assumed the garb of atheism. This is always the arrow which strikes the legislative body determined to dissociate itself with any form of religion, but as in England, where devoted Churchmen are ranged on the side of disestablishment, so in France the national voice that spoke for a severance between Church and State was not that of a people without religion, but rather that of a people unwilling to maintain a system which had fallen away from its duty and its ideals. Atheism and agnosticism would appear to be phases in the religious development of the human race, the positions into which various types of mind are driven when dissatisfied with the explanation of the purpose, duty, and future of the individual as set forth by a particular Church. That some new development of the truth will supersede that which has been cast aside seems inevitable.

In this period of upheaval what is the attitude of the people, of the peasant, to *M. le Curé*? Social intimacy between priest and parishioners

is very great, and the *curé* is often a very good fellow whose practical religion is much broader than the ecclesiasticism he represents. He is, roughly speaking, of the peasant class and is regarded as socially inferior by the equivalent to the "county" circle of his neighbourhood. Unlike the English clergy, who are often distinguishable from the laity by little besides a distinctive collar and hat, he is always to be seen in his *soutane* and with white-bordered black lappets beneath his chin. He is, as a rule, anti-Republican, and is therefore out of sympathy with the people and the whole apparatus of the government of to-day. To a huge mass of the people he is nicknamed the *calotin*.

Paul Sabatier explains how the association of the Church with politics affects the relations of priest and parishioner :—

> At election times, especially, how great an impression is made on the mind of the simple by the defeat of one who has been put forward as the candidate of *le bon Dieu*, and the triumph of the candidate of "the satanic sect"! When such coincidences recur over forty years with increasing frequency, the most pious countryman begins to ask if Satan be not stronger than the Almighty. The artisan, meeting his parish priest, speaks in a tone at once commiserating and mocking of God's business, which is not going well. Blasphemy!

thinks our good priest. But no; they have only blasphemed who taught him to identify a political party with religion. His rudeness is not very different from that of Elijah, chiding on Carmel's summit the priests of Baal. . . . But this rudeness, like that of the prophet, disguises an outburst of religious feeling, still awkward in its manifestation, and even, perhaps, expressing itself by deplorable means—— . . .[1]

Since 1882, when the undenominational schools were established, there has been a fierce battle between Church and State, which has scarcely come to a close at the present hour; but emerging from the din and dust of the prolonged warfare there is one salient fact, namely, a growing desire among the great mass of teachers for increasing the undenominational moral teaching in the schools. A compelling force is obliging the school to build up a strong moral training for the young, entirely independent of clerical influence.

[1] *France To-day: its Religious Orientation.* M. Sabatier proclaims himself a Protestant who has sought to love both Catholicism and Free Thought.

CHAPTER VI

SOME ASPECTS OF PARIS AND OF TOWN LIFE IN GENERAL

The reckless driving and the wonderful lack of regulation in the streets of the capital and the majority of the cities of France do not prevent the streets from possessing a character encouraging sociality and relaxation. This is due to a great extent to the ever-inviting café, which contrives to keep clean table-cloths and the opportunity of a comfortable meal in the open air within six feet of a rushing and tempestuous stream of wheeled traffic. In addition there is much marketing in France, which adds colour and human interest to what might otherwise be a featureless street or square. In walking as a mere visitor through the streets of a French town, one seems to witness more of the intimate life of the place in a few hours than one would do in England in a

week. From the baking of bread to haircutting and shaving and the eating of food, there is much more of work and play visible from the curb-stone. In England the staff of life seems to reach the dining-room table by invisible means, so seldom does one see bread carried through the streets, but among the French—a nation of bread-eaters—long loaves as well as circular ones are to be seen tucked under the arm of almost every tenth person one meets. The working classes seem to be continually buying bread freshly baked, and one loaf at a time! And those who may be seen carrying bread or vegetables, or whatever they have just purchased at the market, are more at home in the street than are Anglo-Saxons, who are apt to regard the common highways of their towns as channels for coming and going to and from business or pleasure whereon lingering or conversation is undesirable, indiscreet, and not without danger, for it is generally recognised that those who pass hours of rest or idleness in the streets are persons without homes or of undesirable reputation. But in a French city one is invited at every turn to buy a newspaper or periodical at a kiosk and to take a seat at a table close by, where, having

ordered a bock or a cup of coffee, one is free to read undisturbed for hours.

In Paris the gossip of the *boulevards* is part of the life of a big section of the people, and yet to the casual and superficial observer it might be thought that there was less opportunity for chatting in the streets than is offered in London. The French *boulevard* is in reality no more free from danger than the English street, but the people have accustomed themselves to the conditions. Among Latin peoples there is a time-honoured weakness for throwing out of the window all sorts and conditions of rubbish, and those who are chatting in a patch of shade in some quiet corner of a street may be rudely disturbed by the fall of a basinful of old cabbage leaves or other kitchen ejecta. Worse than this are the strange and often offensive odours that assail one in the streets. Imperfect sanitation is commonly the cause of the noxious atmosphere of so many streets in French towns. The artist sometimes pays a heavy price for the picture he obtains of some picturesque quarter on account of the contaminated air he is obliged to breathe. In Caen, where splendid Norman and Gothic churches thrill those who appreciate mediaeval

architecture, the malodorous streets often frighten one away.

Sanitation has improved enormously in recent years, and is still making great strides forward, but the people have a great deal to learn in the use of the new appliances that are provided. This leeway is less easy to make up than that of mechanical contrivance, and much time will no doubt elapse before every one is educated up to the proper appreciation and use of sanitary arrangements. Municipal authorities have also much to learn. There should not exist the smallest loophole for an architect to erect a modern building without providing a direct outlet to the open air to all the sanitary quarters, and yet in a recently erected hotel in the Étoile district of Paris, such a cardinal requirement of health is ignored, the only ventilation being a window that lights a cupboard for hot-water cans, and that in turn is the sole ventilation of a bathroom, outside air reaching neither the first nor the last! London, which before the Great Fire was a city whose smells had become proverbial, is now the cleanest and healthiest city in the world, its sanitary by-laws leaving no loopholes for slipshod work; but Paris, the

world centre for the choicest and most exquisite of perfumery, has still much progress to make before complete enjoyment of its cheerful, busy, richly coloured street life can be experienced.

Every one knows the difficulties of looking at and observing with seeing eyes the everyday objects with which one is surrounded. A little girl paying a visit to London from the country once pointed out to the writer what a number of blind horses there were to be seen in the streets, and he was obliged to confess that he had never noticed any. Such limitations seem to debar one from making comparisons between one's own form of urban civilisation and another, but allowing for a certain lack of observation in the land of one's upbringing, there are some features of French town life to which one may draw attention.

Very early in his first experiences of Paris the visitor discovers that the rule of the road is to keep to the right, and that there is little certainty of what may happen where the great streams of traffic meet. The policeman of Paris may hold up his baton, but it is not in the least likely that a complete check to the traffic behind him will result. After an exhaustive study of London

A TYPICAL COCHER OF PARIS.

methods the Parisian authorities have come to the conclusion that it is the French character which prevents their officers from carrying out the same methods in Paris. Notwithstanding the quiet way in which the French submit to certain laws which would not be tolerated in England, they appear to resent control in this department of life. The police of Britain are a bigger, more solid and imperturbable type than those of their neighbours across the Channel, but an east-ender might make impertinent comments if the policeman who held up his donkey-cart had patent leather toe-caps to his boots—a by-no-means unusual sight in Paris !

The quaint, noisy omnibuses pulled by three horses abreast have been replaced by heavy motor-propelled vehicles which still, however, preserve the old features of first- and second-class sections, and the standing accommodation for eight or ten persons. One mounts and alights from the middle of the rear of the vehicle, the opening being guarded by a chain controlled by the conductor—a method offering less opportunity for dropping off before the 'bus has come to a standstill. Although the motor-cab is present in considerable numbers, the horse-drawn

taxi still holds its own. It is cheap, and although, through the close coupling of the front pair of wheels, it can be overturned quite easily, it is a decidedly pleasant means of conveyance, with less anxiety for the fare than the auto-taxi, but the drivers seem to desire to out-do the chauffeurs in giving as much thrill and sensation as skilful and often reckless driving will provide.

His hatred of the *bourgeois*—the "man in the street" —in spite of, and indeed because of, his being a potential client, is expressed at every yard. He constantly tries to run them down, which makes strangers to Paris accuse the Paris cabman of driving badly, while in point of fact he is not driving at all, but playing with miraculous skill a game of his own. . . . The cabman's wild career through the streets, the constant waving and slashing of his pitiless whip, his madcap *hurtlements* and collisions, the frenzied gesticulations which he exchanges with his "fare," the panic-stricken flight of the agonized women whose lives he has endangered, the ugly rushes which the public occasionally make at him with a view to lynching him, the sprawlings and fallings of his maddened, hysterical, starving horse, contribute as much as anything to the spasmodic intensity, the electric blue-fire diablerie, which are characteristic of the general movement of Paris.[1]

No doubt the hansom-cab — the gondola of London as some one termed it—would have

[1] Rowland Strong, *The Sensations of Paris.*

survived if it had accepted the limitations of the taximeter, but refusing to adjust itself to circumstance its numbers steadily diminished.

Among the omnibuses and taxis of both types and the numerous private motor-cars there passes at all times of the day a wonderful stream of country vehicles. Vegetables are conspicuous, but these might be overlooked, whereas the hay and straw carts assail the eye by their immense proportions. They might almost be dubbed lazy men's loads, for they have the appearance of moving hay-stacks and require the most skilful manœuvring in the midst of so much impetuously driven traffic. These country carts almost give the streets of Paris a provincial flavour, their horses and drivers being more essentially rural than anything one sees in London, even in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden. Riding quietly through the wheeled traffic the sight of half a dozen members of the semi-military *Garde républicaine* is a very familiar one. Their uniforms are so military in character that visitors to Paris generally mistake them for soldiers.

On the pavements of the streets a striking feature is the number of women who go about

their business without wearing hats. In the dinner hour of the *midinette*, between twelve and one (from which she derives her name), this is particularly noticeable, the streets and public gardens overflowing with this hard-worked and underpaid class of *Parisienne*. These girls and women are the "labour" of the dressmaking establishments wherein is produced all that is most admired by the well-dressed women of the world. The majority are very underpaid, the young and inexperienced earning about 1 fr. 50 a day, the *petites couturières*, as a rule, having a wage between 1 and 3 francs a day, which does not go far in Paris, where the cost of living is roughly double that of London. In the leading establishments the *midinette* may earn from £35 to over £50 a year, but these are the highly skilled *ouvrières* and do not represent a very large proportion of the whole, whose incomes have been roughly estimated in three divisions, each representing one-third of the whole number. The most poorly paid third receives less than 5 francs a day, the intermediate section attains the 5-franc level, and the most prosperous third exceeds it to the amount already mentioned. A small number of women become what is known

AUTUMN IN THE CHAMPS ELYSÉES, PARIS.

as *premières* in famous houses in the Rue de la Paix, the classic street from which the fashions in woman's attire for the whole of the civilised world are believed to emanate. These clever French women are endowed with a very high degree of taste and skill, and their gifts reach a comparatively high market value, bringing in an annual income of about £150.

The work-girls who take sewing to their homes can earn from 75 centimes to 2 francs a day. In her interesting book on Paris life Mlle. de Pratz gives the following two budgets of *midinettes* receiving £34 and £48 per annum :—

	850 fr. per annum (£34).		1200 fr. per annum (£48).	
Lodging	100	£4	150	£6
Food	550	£22	750	£30
Clothes	100	£4	150	£6
Heat, light, washing, and recreation	100	£4	150	£6
	850		1200	

The struggle to make ends meet on the smaller incomes is no doubt great, for Paris, it must always be remembered, does not provide cheap living for any one, not even in its poorest quarters. As a whole the *midinette* class is badly fed and therefore delicate and too often a prey to consumption. It does not produce a high average

of good-looking girls, for, being fond of amusement, late hours are indulged in very generally, with the result that when the hour for work arrives insufficient rest has been obtained. No doubt in so large a class—they are computed to number about 110,000—there is a wide range of character and morals, but there seems little doubt that, as a class, the chastity of the most poorly paid does not rank high. In a moral atmosphere such as that breathed by Parisians as a whole, it would be almost impossible for girls subjected to so much temptation on account of poverty to resist. And there is commonly no loss of self-respect when the downward step has been taken, for even when a girl convicted of such moral laxity is blamed, she merely replies with calmness that it is quite natural.

The Apache class lives in its own particular quarter of the city, and its members are not easily recognisable by the general public. The fraternity tattoo a certain arrangement of dots on the forearm by which recognition is instantly obtained. These dots indicate the motto of the Apache, *Mort aux vaches*! by which is intended their perpetual warfare with the police. This strange class of anti-social beings is recruited

from many grades of Parisian life, all suffering from some abnormal mental condition unless drawn into the grip of the strange brotherhood by mischance when very young, as will sometimes happen with girls at an immature age. In spite of the national training in arms of the young men of France, this incredible class continues to exist and to perpetrate outrage, murder, and robbery. How many of these outlaws of society have experienced military service, and to what extent it has modified or accentuated their abnormality, are questions to which one would like to have answers.

Probably the average Parisian of the middle classes is more aware of the enormities of the *concierge* than of the Apache. The one is an ever-present annoyance, and the other a thing read about in the evening newspapers, but not encountered personally. Not so *La Concierge.* This individual is employed by a landlord to act as his watchdog in a block of flats. His duties are connected with showing the flats to prospective tenants, collecting rent, keeping the staircases clean, and delivering letters, the last being required because the Paris postman does not climb the stairs in flat buildings—all the letters

for the building being delivered into the hands of the *concierge*. It is this matter of one's letters which gives the caretaker his power. He uses it to extort liberal gratuities for every small service, as well as a handsome *étrenne* on New Year's Day. It is the landlord who is at the fountain-head of the trouble. How seldom is it otherwise! He pays the *concierge* an entirely inadequate sum for his services, and as he has to supplement his income in some other way he, as a rule, leaves his wife in charge for a large part of the day and earns a supplemental sum elsewhere. The Frenchwoman is too often inclined to avarice, and it seems to be the exception to find in Paris a *concierge's* wife who will not levy a form of blackmail on the tenants whose letters come into her hands. She will make herself familiar with the character of the correspondence that each tenant receives, and if insufficiently tipped will not hesitate to hold up any letters that she believes are of importance. The opening of letters with steam is not beneath the moral plane of *Madame la Concierge*, and by various means she obtains such an intimate knowledge of the concerns of each tenant that peace and freedom from endless petty annoy-

ances can only be bought at the price which she deems satisfactory. Mlle. de Pratz gives a vigorous picture of this bugbear of flat life in Paris, telling of the scandals that are circulated concerning entirely innocent people who have failed in the liberality of their *étrennes*, and how the residents of ill-reputation buy immunity from these baneful attentions by their liberal tips. How long, it may reasonably be asked, will Paris consent to this iniquity, which could be remedied by the delivery of letters direct to the door of each flat ?

It is often a matter of discussion how far the proverbial politeness of the French goes beneath the surface. Generalising on such a topic is hedged about with pitfalls, and the wary are disinclined to enter such debatable ground. Compared to the British, whose self-consciousness or shyness too often leads to awkwardness in those moments of social intercourse when dexterity is needful, the French are undoubtedly ages ahead. The right phrase exactly fitting the requirements of the moment comes easily to their lips, and with it, as a rule, the right expression and attitude; and yet one must travel often in the underground railways of Paris to see a

man give up his seat to a woman who is standing. It is understood that a young man cannot offer his place to a young woman, because it would suggest *arrière-pensées*; but if this regrettable state of affairs does exist, the restriction to such action does not apply when an old woman carrying a bundle is standing beside a youth, who could not be accused of anything but courtesy if he rose to save her the discomfort of standing. But no one seems to think such action a requirement of common politeness. While one finds great charm and civility among the assistants in shops, which often add very much to the pleasure of shopping, a disagreement on a business matter may be handled with much less courtesy than in a British shop. A hard, almost angry expression will come upon *madame* or *mademoiselle's* face, where over the Channel one would meet a look of mere anxiety. But Paris shopkeepers no doubt have a very cosmopolitan world to attend to, and they perhaps encounter many rogues. There is unevenness in manners everywhere, and while one class of workers may be soured by adverse conditions and lose their natural charm in the economic struggle, another will expand in the sun of easy and pleasant

conditions. The Parisian horse taxi-cab driver with his picturesque shiny tall hat and crimson waistcoat is not conspicuous for his politeness unless his *pour-boire* is very liberal, and the railway porter can easily be insulting if he is dissatisfied with a tip. In London there is much unmannerly pushing on to trams and omnibuses during the morning and evening hours, restricted here and there by the method of the queue, but in Paris all the chief stopping-places of the omnibuses are provided with publicly exposed bunches of numbered tickets. On a wet day a little girl or a cripple has merely to tear off one of these slips of paper, and when the 'bus arrives the conductor takes up his passengers in the numerical order of their tickets—all unfair hustling being thus eliminated.

The Parisian *bonne à tout faire* has been diminishing in numbers for many years. In the thirty years between 1866 and 1896 the total was nearly halved, leaving about 700,000 of this overworked and underpaid class. The day of frilled caps has gone, and even a bib to the apron is considered an out-of-date demand. It is no doubt the need for stringent economy in the flats constituting the greatest part of home life

in Paris, which is responsible for the dislike to domestic service on the part of the young women of the capital.

An undesirable arrangement in flat buildings is the housing of all the maids of the building in very small bedrooms on the top floor. In the hours in which the girls are free from duty they are able to do more or less as they please on their floor, and the result is that the natural protection of the home is missing in the hours of rest and leisure, when their need is most pressing. The average *bonne à tout faire* is not disinclined to hard work, and she is clever and willing to put herself to any trouble in an emergency or when there are guests to be entertained. Boredom however, seems to settle upon her during the normal routine of life, and her buoyant nature makes her inclined to sing and talk loudly about her work. She is in a great proportion of cases more intimate with the family than the servants in London flats, and on this account her manner assumes a familiarity that in the circumstances is fairly inevitable. A man visitor will commonly raise his hat to the maid and call her "Mademoiselle."

Probably the Paris maid-of-all-work is not

worked any harder than the single servant in London—the only real difference being the morning marketing, which she regularly undertakes. There is attractiveness in the life she sees in the streets and markets, and in addition there is the tradesman's *sou* which finds its way into her pocket for every *franc's* worth of goods purchased. If honest the girl's commission begins and ends with the *sou du franc*, but if she is otherwise she will make little alterations to the amounts in the household books, and thus add by these petty but perpetual thefts a considerable sum to her annual wages. How far such dishonesty is practised it is impossible to say, and in the absence of any figures one may hope that a few cases are the cause of much talk.

Rents in Paris are high, and the tendency is to mount still higher. Blocks of flats that have been let at a quite reasonable rent are frequently "modernised" with a few superficial improvements and renovations and relet at vastly increased prices. This is much the case with those formerly let at from £60 to £100 a year, and the restriction in the number of cheaper homes available for the poor has been going on so steadily that the problem has become one which

it will be necessary for the State to tackle. The increase in rents has, in some instances, been only 10 per cent, but in many instances it is more than that, and here and there the upward bound has reached three or four times that amount.

One is sometimes puzzled to know how the Parisian struggles along, for besides his ascending rent he has to pay much more for all household stuff, whether it is curtains for his windows (which are taxed), a cake of soap, or an enamelled iron can. No wonder that the best sitting-room is kept shut up on certain days of the week, and that polished wooden floors are so frequently seen in place of carpeted ones.

Tenants having large families are in a most awkward predicament, for landlords on all hands discourage them, and if the Government wish to go to one of the root causes of the diminishing birth-rate, they must see to it that the housing of the middle and lower middle classes is a less difficult and precarious feature of their struggle for existence. Perhaps, now that the United States has set the example of lowering and in some instances sweeping away the protective tariffs on certain articles, France may follow suit. If the heavy duties on cotton goods were removed

there is no doubt whatever that the burden of housekeeping in France would be instantly relieved. But the relief in this respect would be trifling compared to that which would be felt in the food bill. Tea costs from 4s. to 6s. per pound. Sugar averages 5d., rice 6d., and jam 10d. per pound. A remarkable instance of the working of the tariff is given by Mlle. de Pratz in her interesting work already quoted. "In a small village I know near Paris," she writes, "thousands of pounds worth of fresh fruit and beet-sugar are exported each year to England. But this village uses English-made jam made from their own fruit and sugar, which, after being exported and reimported, costs half the price of home-made French jam."

As recently as March 1910 the protective system of 1892 was strengthened, duties being raised all round. In support of the changes it was argued that foreign countries were adopting similar measures, and that fiscal and social legislation were laying new burdens upon home industries. With Great Britain still maintaining its system of free imports and the United States moving in the direction of Free Trade, the first argument begins to lose its force.

These questions of rent and the cost of food do not, of course, press upon the very considerable numbers of wealthy residents in Paris, but they are not on this account less vital to the well-being of the mighty cosmopolitan city. And if these features of urban existence were overlooked in any book, however slight, which aims at putting before the reader some salient aspects of French life, the blank would leave much unexplained. Bearing in mind the expense of living in the large towns a thousand little things are at once interpreted.

It has been said of Paris that the population belongs less to France than that of any other city in the country, for the proportion of residents of other nationalities has gone up prodigiously in the last half century. There is a glamour about the city which seems to act as a magnet among all the civilised nations of the world. "The aristocratic class," says Mr. E. H. Barker,[1] "nominally so much associated with Paris life, is becoming less and less French. The old Legitimist families, so intimately connected with the Faubourg St. Germain under the Second Empire and a good while afterwards, who at

[1] *France of the French.*

one time held so aloof even from the Bonapartist nobility, have greatly changed their habits and views of social intercourse. The two nobilities now intermarry without apparent hindrance on the score of prejudices, and mingle without any suspicion of class divisions. But all this society helps to form what is called *Le Tout Paris*, which is almost as cosmopolitan as French."

When one stands before the great Byzantine Church of the *Sacré Cœur*, that holds aloft its white domes against the sky up above Paris on the hill of Montmartre, and looks down on the multiplicity of roofs, there is always a film of smoke obscuring detail and softening the outlines of some portions of the city. Yet when one walks through the streets the clean creamy whiteness of the buildings would almost give the stranger the impression that he had reached a city that had no use for coal. Even in the older streets where renovation and repairs are very infrequent there is never a suspicion of that uniform greyness that the big cities of Britain produce. In all the great boulevards in the whole of the Étoile district and wherever the houses are well built and of modern construction, the bright clean stone-work is so free from the effects

of smoke that a Dutch housewife would fail to see the need for external cleaning. The façades of nearly all the houses in the newly reconstructed streets have a certain monotony about them which has been inherited from the days of Hausmann's great rebuilding. There is seldom any colour except in the windows of shops, for the universal shutters, which in Italy are brilliantly painted bright green, brown, blue, or even pink, are here uniformly white or the palest of greys. So many of the new streets are, however, planted with trees that the colour scheme resolves itself into green and pale cream, except in winter, when the blackish stems of the trees add nothing to the gaiety of the streets.

Contrasting the streets in the neighbourhood of the Parc Monceaux with those of Mayfair, London has the advantage for variety of architectural styles and for complete changes of atmosphere; but for spacious splendour, for what can properly be termed elegance, Paris stands on a vastly higher plane. The dreary stucco pomposity of Kensington and Belgravia fortunately cannot be discovered in Paris, and it is well for the world that few cities indulged in this architectural make-believe. While

Belgravia can only keep her self-respect by continually covering herself with fresh coats of paint, the honest stone-work of Paris lets the years pass without showing any appreciable signs of deterioration. Unlike London, where there are seemingly endless streets of two and three storeys, Paris has developed the tall building of five or six floors. The girdle of fortification has no doubt directed this tendency. Where the streets are not wide the lofty houses increase the effect of narrowness, and many of the side streets in the St. Antoine district have, with their innumerable shutters, a very close resemblance to some Italian cities.

It is a mistake to suppose that the whole of Paris has been rebuilt; for, apart from Notre Dame and such well-known Romanesque and Gothic churches as St. Étienne-du-Mont, St. Germain, the tower of St. Jacques, and the Sainte Chapelle, there are gabled houses of considerable age in many of the by-ways. These are almost invariably covered with a mask of stucco that does its best to hide up their seventeenth-century or earlier characteristics. The beautiful and dignified quadrangular building that is now called the Musée Carnavalet, was the residence of

the Marquise de Sévigné and was built in the sixteenth century, although altered and added to in 1660. Earlier than this is the fascinating Hôtel Cluny, a late Gothic house built as the town residence of the abbots of Cluny. This building even links up modern Paris with the Roman *Lutetia Parisiorum*. Another interesting architectural survival is the Hôtel de Lauzan, a typical residence of a great aristocrat of the days of *Le Roi soleil*. The Palais du Louvre, dating in part from the days of François I., the Tuileries, begun in 1564 and finished by Louis XIV., and the Conciergerie wherein Marie Antoinette and Robespierre were confined, are buildings of such world-renown that it is scarcely necessary to mention them.

In many ways Paris is similar in arrangement to London. It is divided in two by its river, which cuts it from east to west, and the more important half is on the northern bank. The wealthy quarters are on the west and the poorer to the east. The great park, the Bois de Boulogne, is also on the west side of the city. In Paris, the ancient nucleus of the city was an island in the river, but London, although it originated on a patch of land raised high above

the surrounding marshes, was never truly insulated. The Bastille, which may be compared with the Tower of London, occupied a very similar position not far from the north bank of the river and at the eastern side of the mediaeval city. All the chief theatres and places of amusement are on the north side of the river, and, as in London, so are all the Royal Palaces; but here the parallels between the cities appear to end, and one observes endless notable differences.

The Seine divides the city much more fairly than does the Thames. London has no opulent quarter south of its river, but Paris has the Faubourg St. Germain, where her oldest and most distinguished residents have their residences—houses possessing solemnly majestic courtyards guarded by stupendous gateways. In the same quarter are some of the more important foreign embassies. And the river of Paris being scarcely half the width of that of London has made bridging comparatively cheap and resulted in more than double the number of such links. There is no marine flavour in Paris. No vessels of any size reach it, and its banks are not therefore made ugly by tall and hideous wharf buildings. It is a walled city, being encompassed by a

circle of very formidable fortifications, still capable of resisting attack by modern military methods. Its broad avenues and boulevards, tree-planted and perfectly straight, give the whole city an atmosphere of spaciousness and of dignity that is lacking in London, if one excepts the vicinity of Regent Street and Piccadilly, and a few other west-end thoroughfares.

Wherever one goes in France among the cities and larger towns the ideas of big and eye-filling perspectives are aimed at by the municipal authorities and architects. Lyons, Nice, Orleans, Tours, Havre, Montpellier, Nîmes, Marseilles, to mention places that come readily into the mind, have all achieved something of the Parisian ideal, and even the more mediaeval towns, whenever an opportunity presents itself, expand into tree-shaded boulevards of widths that would make an English municipal councillor rub his eyes and gasp. It is curious to witness how, in many of the older towns, the narrow and cramped quarters, necessitated in the days when city walls existed, are continuing their existence in wonderful contrast to spacious suburbs. The glamour of these narrow ways is so entrancing to the visitor and the lover of history that he trembles

to think that a day may come when all these romantic nuclei of French cities have been rebuilt on the ideals of Hausmann.

Wherever one wanders in France, even in mere villages, one can scarcely find a place that has not at least one café with inviting little tables on the pavement, giving that subtle Latin atmosphere so refreshing to the Anglo-Saxon (who, however, would never dream of wishing to imitate the custom in his own country), and so full of that curiously fascinating Bohemianism which Mr. Locke has caught in the pages of *The Beloved Vagabond*. Could Britain exchange the public-house for the café half the temperance reformer's task would be done, but one can scarcely contemplate without a shiver the prospect of eating and drinking in the open air anywhere north of the Thames for more than a few weeks of summer.

CHAPTER VII

OF RURAL LIFE IN FRANCE

Peasant ownership of land does not always imply prosperity, and because such a vast majority of French peasants possess their own few acres, one must not jump to the conclusion that all these little farmers live comfortable and prosperous lives. In very large tracts of what has so often been called "the most fertile country in Europe,"[1] the peasant is only able to tear from the soil he owns the barest existence. By unremitting toil he makes his land produce enough to give him and his family a diet mainly composed of bread and vegetables. Meat, coffee, and wine come under the heading of luxuries, and so much that is nutritious is missing from the normal dietary that it would seem as though the minimum requirements of health were not

[1] The same claim is frequently made for England.

met. Long hours of steady toil, and food which the Parisian would consider insufficient to make life tolerable, is the lot of the peasant proprietors of France wherever the soil is ungenerous or distance from railways and markets keeps prices low.

In the unprofitable soils of the Cevennes, and in certain parts of the province of Corrèze, the peasants can cultivate little besides buckwheat and potatoes. The latter, with chestnuts which are also produced in these mountainous districts, form the staple food of the agricultural population, and their drink is water, which they sometimes enliven with the berries of the juniper. This is the simple and hard-working life of those whose lot is cast in what may be called the stony places. Quite different are the conditions of life in Normandy or the wonderfully fertile plain of La Beauce, where is grown the greatest part of the wheat produced in France. Here the generous return for the labour expended on the soil brings such prosperity to the peasant owner that he often turns his eyes to higher rungs in the social ladder than that of husbandry, offering his land for sale, and so giving opportunities for the capitalist to invest in a profitable industry.

Success may be said to bring with it dangers to which the peasant of the poorer soils is not subjected. Writing of the farmers of La Beauce and of parts of Normandy, Mr. Barker says: "Too often are they found to be high feeders, copious drinkers, keenly, if not sordidly, acquisitive, unimaginative, and coarse in their ideas and tastes. Material prosperity, when its effects are not corrected by mental, and especially by moral, culture, has an almost fatal tendency to develop habits that are degrading and qualities that repel. . . . It is to be noted as a social symptom that among the class of prosperous agriculturalists in France, the birth-rate is exceptionally low."

Of the 17,000,000 of the population who are more or less dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood, only about 6,500,000 actually work on the soil. Those who own holdings of less than twenty-five acres number nearly 3,000,000, and the total area of land held in this way is something between 15 and 20 per cent of the whole cultivated area. About three-quarters of a million persons possess the balance. The sizes of the holdings, of course, vary enormously. Besides those who own their land, there is the

large class of *métayers*, who are part of a complicated system which persists in spite of its theoretical impossibility of smooth working. Where a landowner is a *gentilhomme campagnard*, he will in most cases have a few farms attached to his residence, which is always *le château* to the peasant, however difficult to discover its old-time manorial splendours may have become. The farmers who work for the landowner are not rent-payers: they merely share with him in the results of their labour, a system of co-operation which results in very close relations between landlord and farmer. No hard and fast rules are followed as to the proportion of the crops which falls to the landlord, or what share he has of the cattle. It is common for him to furnish draught animals as well as seed and implements. This system is limited very much to those districts where agriculture has stood still for a very long period, such as the Limousin, and the total of the land worked on the *métayage* system is only 7 per cent of the whole of the cultivated land.

To this day the methods of husbandry maintained in the less accessible departments are scarcely ahead of the Romans, and on the slopes

of the Pyrenees one may still see the flail in use for threshing purposes, while the plough with a wooden share, which seems likely to hold its own for a long time to come in certain of the mountainous districts, is the same as those depicted by prehistoric sculptors high on the rock-faces of Monte Bego on the Franco-Italian frontier.

In the greatest part of France oxen are used for draught purposes, and these picturesque, cream-coloured beasts, yoked to curious big-wheeled country carts, are always an added charm to the country road. Whether they are seen patiently plodding along a white and dusty perspective of tree-bordered road, or are standing quietly in a farmyard with lowered heads while the queer tumbril behind them is being loaded, they have picture-making qualities which the horse lacks.

The carts are wonderfully primitive, two wheels being favoured for purposes which in England are always considered to require four. In fact the four-wheeled cart is difficult to discover anywhere in rural France. Even the giant tuns containing the cider they brew in Normandy, or those that are filled with wine in the Midi and other grape-producing districts of the land, are

borne on two great wheels, and a pair of clumsy poles that, when horses are used, are tapered down to form shafts.

Farms differ in character and attractiveness according to local conditions in every country, but France shows an astonishing range of styles. In the north one finds the timber-framed barn and outhouse delightfully prevalent, and in Normandy the farm often possesses the character of those to be seen in Kent and Sussex, although south of the Channel the compact, rectangular arrangement of barns is perhaps more noticeable than to the north. Between the Seine and the Loire, the timber-framed structures are very extensively replaced by those of stone; but although lacking in the interest of detail, their colour is exceedingly rich, for the thatched roofs are very frequently thick with velvety moss, and the cream-coloured walls are adorned by patches of orange and silvery-grey lichen. Wooden windmills are conspicuous on the shallow undulations of the plain of La Beauce. Where roofs are tiled, they too have become green with moss, giving a wonderful mellowness to the groups of buildings. Farther south the farms are still of stone, and some of them have an atmo-

sphere of romance about them in their circular towers with high conical roofs, and with even the added picturesqueness of a turret or two.

South of Poitiers the roofs of nearly all the houses take on the low pitch and the curved tile which belong to the whole of the southern zone of the country, and prevent one from noticing any marked architectural change in crossing the frontiers into Spain or Italy.

Taken as a whole, the villages are without any of the tidy charm to be found in nearly every part of England. A hamlet gives the road that passes through it the appearance of a farmyard. Hay, straw, and manure are allowed to accumulate to such an extent that in the twilight a stranger might think he had inadvertently left the road and strayed into a farm. And whereas in England the rural hamlet does not usually crowd up to the thoroughfare, it is often very much the reverse in France. The writer has traversed thousands of miles of French roads, has wandered with a bicycle in the byways, but has not yet seen a village green with a pond and ducks, or even a churchyard with a suspicion of that garden-like finish which makes England unique. The velvety turf that grows on Britain's

sheep-cropped commons does not exist outside that land, and one never even expects to find the French wayside relieved by such features.

Economy in using every inch of soil, in avoiding the waste of sunshine on arable lands, and in preventing the waste of timber caused by letting trees grow untrimmed, has given the French landscape its most characteristic features. Hedges which the Englishman has learnt to love from his childhood, first because of the wild life they shelter and the blackberries and nuts they provide, and later on account of the beauty they add to every cultivated landscape, are an exceptional feature in France. In immense areas such a dividing line is never to be seen, and saving perhaps for a small tree that is scarcely more than an overgrown bush, there is little to break the horizon line except the tall poplars, birches, and other trees that line the main roads. These are not allowed to live idle, ornamental lives: they, like the toiling peasant, must work for their living by providing as many branches as possible for the periodical lopping. In this way wood for the oven and for the kitchen fire is supplied in nearly every department of the country.

In the fat and prosperous districts of Normandy, where rich grazing lands produce the butter for which the province is famed, hedges are as common as in England, and where mop-headed trees are not in sight, it is not easy to notice any marked difference between the two countries.

Brittany is the province where the wayside cross is most in evidence, but in every part of the country these symbols of the Christian faith are to be found. Outside Brittany it is rare to-day to see any one taking any notice of them, and no doubt the spread of education and the consequent shrinking of the superstitions of the peasantry, make the crucifix less and less a need on dark and misty nights. Offerings of wild flowers are still tied to the shaft of the wayside cross, where they rapidly turn brown, and resemble a handful of hay. The well-head is a feature of the farm and cottage which varies in every part of the land. It is frequently a picturesque object, having in many localities a wrought-iron framework for supporting the pulley-wheel.

Horses and mules are seldom to be seen without some touch of colour or curious detail in their harness. It may be a piece of sheep-skin dyed

A BRETON CALVAIRE. THE ORATORY OF JACQUES CARTIER.

blue and fixed to the top of the collar, or that part of the harness will be of wood, quaintly devised, and studded with brass nails and other ornament. Red woollen tassels are much in favour in some districts.

The breeding of horses in great numbers takes place in the north coast regions of Brittany, Normandy, and between the mouth of the Seine and the Belgian frontier. Using cattle for draught purposes so very extensively no doubt keeps down the number of the horses in the country, but in 1905 the total had risen to considerably over three millions. Tarbes, a town near the Pyrenees, gives its name to the Tarbais breed of light cavalry and saddle-horses, and the chief northern classes are the Percheron, the Boulonnais for heavy draught work, and the Anglo-Norman for heavy cavalry and light draught purposes. Cattle, pigs, and asses have been increasing in numbers in recent years, but sheep and lambs have shown a very decided falling off, $22\frac{1}{2}$ millions in 1885 having dropped to $17\frac{3}{4}$ in 1905. Sheep are raised on all the poorer grazing lands of the Alps, the Jura, the Vosges, the Cevennes, and the Pyrenees, and also on the sandy district of Les Landes on the

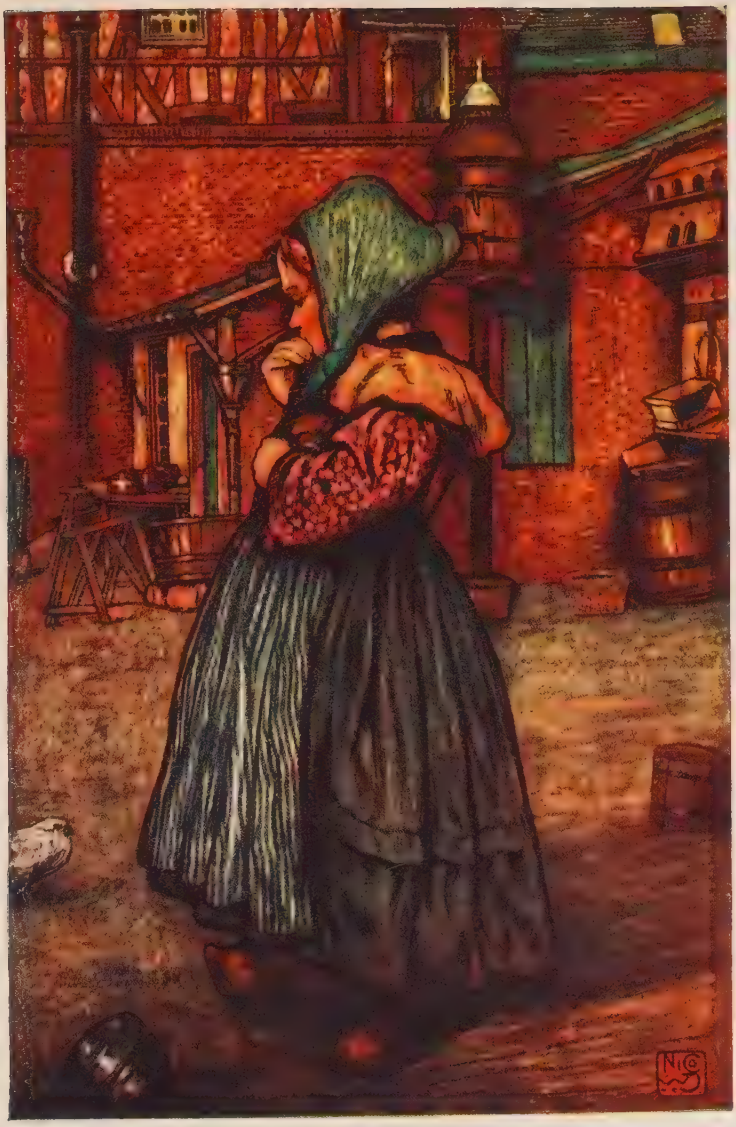
Bay of Biscay. South-western France in general, and the plain of Toulouse in particular, produce a fine class of draught oxen. In the northern districts they are stall-fed on the waste material of the beet-sugar and oil-works, and of the distilleries.

It is a popular error to imagine that the State owns all the forests of France and even the wayside trees. This is due no doubt to the fact that certain governmental restrictions do apply to the owners of growing timber. The total of forest land amounts to only 36,700 square miles, or about 18 per cent of the whole country, and of this about a third belongs to the State or the communes. Fontainebleau has 66 square miles of forest, but although the best known, it is not by any means the largest, the Forêt d'Orleans having an area of 145 square miles. Much planting of pines has taken place in Les Landes, and that marshy district, famed for its shepherds who use stilts for crossing the wet places and water-courses, has by this means altered its character very considerably. Reafforestation is taking place on the slopes of the Pyrenees and the Alps which have been laid bare by the woodman's axe.

Standing quite apart from the rest of the agriculture of the country is the wine-grower. His industry requires very specialised knowledge, and his dangers and difficulties are in some ways greater than those of the farmer. It may be the terrible insect called the phylloxera that destroys the growth of the vine, it may be mildew, or it may be over-production, but any of these troubles bear hardly upon the vine-grower, who is, broadly speaking, a humble type of peasant with very little capital. Before the war with Germany these people were a fairly prosperous and contented class, but since that time formidable troubles have smitten them very heavily. The awful visitation of the phylloxera is said to have cost as much as the war indemnity paid to Germany, *i.e.* £200,000,000, and when it was discovered that certain American vines were not subjected to the ravages of the pest, and feverish planting had established the new varieties in the land, a new trouble, in the form of over-production, presented itself to the unfortunate growers. More land had been converted into vineyards than had ever produced such crops in the past, and a large production of wine in Algeria so lowered prices that in 1907 affairs in the Midi

reached a critical state. Riots occurred at Béziers and Narbonne, incendiarism and pillage took place at Epernay and Ay, and for a time the Government found itself confronted with an infuriated mass of peasants, who blamed it for the disastrously low prices then prevailing. They also attributed the stagnation in the trade to the fraudulent methods of sale that had become common. They were not very far from the truth in stating that they did not reap so much advantage as those who grew cereals and beetroot, while paying for the protective policy in the high prices of food and all other commodities.

The peasant might almost be said to wear a uniform, so universal in France is the soft black felt hat and the dark-blue cotton smock in which he appears in the market-place. In this garb one sees a wide variety of national types, from the English-looking men of Normandy to the dark-complexioned, black-haired, and lithe race of the south. Often the latter have an almost wild appearance, terrifying to the British or American girl who strays any distance from the modern types of palatial hotel which can now be found in regions of medicinal springs in the Pyrenees. He is, however, a much less formid-



A PEASANT CHILD OF NORMANDY.

able person when he enters into conversation, and, taken as a whole, the agriculturalist is a very pleasant-mannered, hospitable, and dignified person. He possesses in a marked degree the domestic virtues, the level-headed shrewdness, the patience, thrift, and foresight which give steadiness to his nation. In small towns in the south he can be a person of immense sociality. The *place* during the warmer months of the year, after the work of the day is done, buzzes with conversation, the steady hum of which would puzzle a stranger until he saw its cause. In the strange little walled town of Aigues-Mortes, the entire male population seems to congregate in the central square, and there passes the evening at the tables of the three or four cafés. So much conversation as that indulged in by these peasants of the Rhone delta would seem sufficient to produce solutions for all the problems of the wine industry, as well as those of rural populations in general.

Care for the future makes the peasant toil and save for his children. Husband and wife will keep their children's future in view in a most self-effacing fashion, and if their shrewdness in business may go rather beyond the mark, it is in

the interests of their family that they are working. The reward is too often that which comes to the old—the sense of being a burden to their offspring when rheumatism and kindred ills have robbed them of further capability for toil.

In the country districts that are out of touch with modern influence, the peasant keeps his womenkind in a state of subservience that is almost mediaeval, and the custom of keeping the wife and daughters standing while the father and sons are at meals is still said to be maintained in some parts of the country.[1] The peasant is often a tyrant in his family. In some districts he is in the habit of calling his sons and daughters "my sons and the creatures." He is sometimes quite without any interest in politics. The various types are, however, so marked that the impossibility of labelling the peasantry of such a large slice of Europe with any one set of characteristics is obvious. By reading Zola or George Sand, one gets an insight into the peasant life which little else can give.

One of George Sand's descriptions of the peasantry of the Cevennes is vigorous and vivid. She writes of it as a race "meagre, gloomy,

[1] Hannah Lynch, *French Life in Town and Country.*

rough, and angular in its forms and in its instincts. At the tavern every one has his knife in his belt, and he drives the point into the lower face of the table, between his legs; after that they talk, they drink, they contradict one another, they become excited, and they fight. The houses are of an incredible dirtiness. The ceiling, made up of a number of strips of wood, serves as a receptacle for all their food and for all their rags. Alongside with their faults I cannot but recognise some great qualities. They are honest and proud. There is nothing servile in the manner in which they receive you, with an air of frankness and genuine hospitality. In their innermost soul they partake of the beauties and the asperities of their climate and their soil. The women have all an air of cordiality and daring. I hold them to be good at heart, but violent in character. They do not lack beauty so much as charm. Their heads, capped with a little hat of black felt, decked out with jet and feathers, give to them, when young, a certain fascination, and in old age a look of dignified austerity. But it is all too masculine, and the lack of cleanliness makes their toilette disagreeable. It is an exhibition of discoloured rags above legs long and

stained with mud, that makes one totally disregard their jewellery of gold, and even the rock crystals about their necks." This description is growing out of date in regard to the hats and knives, but the picturesque white cap, with its broad band of brightly coloured ribbon, worn by nearly all the women over a certain age, which George Sand does not mention, seems likely to persist.

The peasant women of France are too often extremely plain and built on clumsy lines. Exceptional districts, such as Arles and other parts of Provence, may produce beautiful types, but the average is not pleasing. This, at least, is the consensus of opinion of those who profess to know France well. The writer would not venture on such a statement on his own authority, although his knowledge of a very considerable number of the departments entirely endorses their opinion. But the more one knows of provincial France the more prepared does one become for surprises, and the less ready to generalise.

Between the educated and uneducated there is less of a gulf than in other countries, on account of the very high average of good manners to be found throughout the whole country, and because

of the quick intelligence that is common to the whole people. The almost pathetic awkwardness of the old-fashioned English hodge scarcely exists in France.

Superstitions among the peasantry are steadily dying out, even in Brittany. The rising tide of knowledge is finding its way into every creek and inlet, and is steadily submerging beliefs in supernatural influences. At one time the rustics lived in the greatest fear of a rain-producing demon who was called the *Aversier*, but the science of meteorology has reduced his personality to a condition as nebulous as the clouds that heralded his approach.

Until quite recent times a very large proportion of the medical work in rural districts was carried out by the nuns of the numerous convents, and the preference for the free services of the kindly Sisters, however limited their knowledge, to those of the fully qualified doctor of the locality is easily explained. The rural practitioner's usual fee has only lately been raised from two francs to three, but on driving any distance an additional charge of one franc for every *kilomètre* is made. The fee of the town doctor, if he is a general practitioner with a good practice, is from

five to ten francs a visit. If he belongs to the type of second-class specialist not common in England but numerous in the cities of France, his fee is from ten to twenty francs a visit. The first-class specialist charges fifty francs, and sometimes seventy-five francs, for a visit. In the country the medical man is often content with a bicycle as the means of reaching his patients, for his income is not very often above £500 a year. No doubt the suppression of the monastic orders in France has improved the position of the doctors, who found few patients in certain parts of the country, especially the north-west, where the fervour of religious belief inclined the rustic to put the most complete faith in the prescriptions of the nuns. No doubt their ample experience in the treatment of small ailments (which the average practitioner so often finds tiresome) gave the Sisters considerable success in their medical work. Women doctors in every country could enormously supplement the work of the men, and perhaps the day will come when the general practitioner has a lady assistant to look after the minor ailments which so often become serious through lack of sufficient attention. How relieved would numbers of men doctors be if they

could turn over to a lady assistant the visiting of all cases of chronic colds, dyspepsia, and the like!

Whole books have been devoted to the *château* life of France, and it would be easy to overstep the limits of this chapter in writing on this interesting subject. The wayfarer in France who knows nothing, or next to nothing, of the interiors of the large houses he sees scattered over the country would probably say that they all looked as though shut up and for sale. He sees in his mind the weed-grown main avenue and the ill-kept pathways. Visions come to him of lawns that have grown into hay-fields, of formal gardens converted into vegetable gardens, of terrace balustrades falling into decay, of walls whose plaster has fallen away in patches like those of a Venetian *palazzo*, of closed shutters, and a look of splendours that have passed. Those who have seen a little more than the mere outsides of the great houses will tell of occupants whose incomes have shrunk to such small sums that they are reduced to living in a few rooms of their ancestral homes, with insufficient servants to do more than keep the place habitable, and to maintain the output of the kitchen garden and

a few flowers for the house. That there are many such *châteaux* is perfectly true. The occupants are mainly anti-Republican in their views. They belong to other days, and are too proud to enter any profession which would bring them into jarring contact with the big majority who are without Royalist leanings. This obliges them to live in threadbare simplicity on the small income their shrunken fortunes provide. Two or three old servants, a few dogs, a horse or two, and a few other luxuries surround them. Formal visits at long intervals are paid to neighbours, who often live at some distance. The *curé* and perchance the doctor are intimate visitors; there may be a few relations who come for visits, but this is often the whole of the social intercourse of M. and Mme. X., who reside in a portion of a *château* of the time of Louis XV. which stands surrounded by a large tract of woodland. But ample incomes, and here and there great wealth, maintain many of the great houses of the countryside with modern luxury in every department. Changes have come in the *châteaux* in recent years which have made breaches in the wall of old-fashioned formality that was so universal until quite lately. Instead of sweet wine

and little hard sponge fingers, tea and *brioches* appear at *le five o'clock*, as it is often called. Where the old-fashioned ideas of faithful servants will allow it, and the masters and mistresses have felt the influences that flow from Paris, changes in furnishing appear in the abandonment of the bareness and austerity of the reception-rooms. Where such influences have not penetrated, one may be quite sure to find all the furniture in the rooms ranged against the walls, and a complete absence of flowers, books, or the smaller odds and ends of convenience or ornament common to most Anglo-Saxon homes. There may be fine tapestries, numerous family portraits and other pictures, elaborate pieces of Boule and ormolu furniture, ornate clocks, and many other beautiful objects, but restraint and constraint are the prevalent notes. Bare polished floors and staircases with only small mats or rugs here and there remain characteristic of the *château* interior. Too often there is no more individuality in a house than would exist were it thrown open to the public as a show-place or museum.

In many of the *châteaux* of the wealthy the charm of what is essentially French is linked with modifications in the directions of Anglo-

Saxon convenience and comfort, producing much the same result as is found in those English homes wherein an affection for a Louis XV. atmosphere has introduced the tall silken or tapestried panels and the stilted and elaborate furniture of the eighteenth century.

Surrounded by extensive forests containing wonderful green perspectives, the *château* is often quite cut off from the sights and sounds of the outer world. When the time of the *chasse* comes round, the woods may perhaps be enlivened by visions of the *chasseurs* in pink or green coats, three-cornered hats, and tall boots, and the sound of their big circular horns may be heard. The silence is more effectually broken when shooting parties meet and the *battue* takes place.

Motor-cars have made neighbours more accessible, and changes are taking place on this account. In pre-motor days the mistress of a *château* was often quite unprepared for visitors. Madame Waddington, the American wife of a senator, who has put some of her experiences of social intercourse in the country into a charming volume,[1] describes a visit paid to a *château* that was half manor, half farm.

[1] *Château and Country Life in France*, Mary K. Waddington, 1908.

THE CATHEDRAL AND PART OF THE OLD CITY OF CHARTRES.

We drove into a large courtyard, or rather farmyard, quite deserted ; no one visible anywhere ; the door of the house was open, but there was no bell nor apparently any means of communicating with any one. Hubert cracked his whip noisily several times without any result, and we were just wondering what we should do (perhaps put our cards under a stone on the steps) when a man appeared, said Mme. B. was at home, but she was in the stable looking after a sick cow—he would go and tell her we were there. In a few minutes she appeared, attired in a short, rusty-black skirt, sabots on her feet, and a black woollen shawl over her head and shoulders. She seemed quite pleased to see us, was not at all put out at being caught in such very simple attire, begged us to come in, and ushered us through a long, narrow hall and several cold, comfortless rooms, the shutters not open, and no fires anywhere, into her bedroom. All the furniture—chairs, tables, and bed—was covered with linen. She explained that it was her *lessive* (general wash) she had just made, that all the linen was *dry*, but she had not had time to put it away, and she called a maid, and they cleared off two chairs—she sat on the bed. It was frightfully cold. We were thankful we had kept our wraps on. She said she supposed we would like a fire after our long cold drive, and rang for a man to bring some wood. He (in his shirt-sleeves) appeared with two or three logs of wood, and was preparing to make a fire with them *all*, but she stopped him, said one log was enough, the ladies were not going to stay long ; so, naturally, we had no fire and clouds of smoke. She was very talkative, never stopped, told us all about her servants, her husband's political campaigns. . . . She asked a great many questions, answering them all herself ; then said,

'I don't offer you any tea, as I know you always go back to have your tea at home, and I am quite sure you don't want any wine.'

Washing days only occur in large French households once a quarter, or at the most monthly, so when the moment arrives the whole establishment is in a ferment. An orgy of soap-suds takes place, and coaling ship in the Navy is scarcely more disturbing to the even flow of daily affairs.

Conversation, where people seldom paid a visit to Paris, ran always in a groove in the *châteaux* and lesser houses described by the young American. The subjects were the woods, the hunting, the schoolmaster, the *curé*, local gossip, and much about the iniquities of the Republic.

Château life is too frequently dull. It as often as not is as out of touch with the realities of modern life as many English country houses where there are no young folk, and where there is no active connection with London and the busy world. The hunting season and shooting parties bring life and activity for a time, but "twice-told tales of foxes killed" do not carry any fertilising intellectual ideas into the byways of upper-class life. An excess of formality pervades

every portion of the day, from the conversation on a new novel to the afternoon drive or the solemn game of *bézique* after dinner. There is a tendency for politics to bulk largely in conversation, even among women, while among men heat is easily generated on this topic, the French being naturally bellicose. Subjects outside France, and matters that do not directly concern the French, rarely come up for discussion, unless the occupants of the *château* are *intellectuels*. It is mainly due to political controversy that duels arise, nearly all the recent encounters having been between journalists and politicians. At the present day, honour is commonly satisfied when the first blood has been drawn, and when pistols are used, hits are infrequent. To show how lightly he took the matter, Ste. Beuve fought under an umbrella. Thiers fought a duel, and so also did the elder Dumas, Lamartine, Veuillot, Rochefort, and Boulanger. Even to-day (1913) septuagenarian generals are not too old to challenge one another, General Bosc (seventy-two) having sent his second to demand satisfaction of General Florentin (seventy-seven) for an unfounded charge of encouraging the use of illegal badges in societies formed for the training of

boys in military duties! It is astonishing that the French should maintain duelling when it is well known how opposed was Napoleon to the absurd practice. "Bon duelliste mauvais soldat," he used to say, and when challenged by the King of Sweden, his reply was that he would order a fencing-master to attend him as plenipotentiary. But the French have a keen sense of personal honour, and one remembers that Montaigne said, "Put three Frenchmen together on the plains of Libya, and they will not be a month in company without scratching each other's eyes out."

A poor man can hardly afford the luxury of a duel, for in Paris it costs about 300 francs, and if one has no friend who is a doctor willing to attend without a fee, the disbursements will even exceed this amount! The first expenses are the taxis for your seconds when they go to meet the other fellow's supporters. These meetings take place at cafés, and their bills have to be met by the duellists. Pistols, if they are used, are hired from Gastine Renette, who inflicts a scorching charge of about 100 francs for the loan. If swords are used they are bought, and the outlay is less, but not every one who is challenged

is sufficiently expert to run the chances of using white weapons. Further expenses are incurred in the hiring of a vehicle in which to drive to the spot selected for the honourable encounter. The drive is punctuated by halts for refreshment for the doctor and the seconds, as well as the coachman. When the conflict has taken place there is often much more than " coffee for one " to be paid for by the duellist. Not only does custom require him to invite doctor and seconds to lunch at an expensive restaurant, but if the duel has re-established amicable relations, there is a double party to be entertained. To find a quiet and suitable spot for the meeting is often exceedingly difficult, the *gendarmerie* in such convenient places as the Meudon Woods being perpetually on the alert, and having offered rewards to any who warned them of the arrival of " a double set of four serious-looking gentlemen in black frock-coats arriving in landaus, with one gentleman in each set with his *gueule de travers*."

Mr. Robert Sherard has described the preliminaries to a duel forced upon him a few years ago.

" . . . . My fencing had grown very rusty," he wrote, " so . . . I went to a fencing school to be coached.

The master . . . had the reputation of being able to teach a man in two lessons how not to get killed in a sword duel. I was not anxious to get killed, so I availed myself of his instructions. These mainly consisted in showing one how to hold one's point always towards one's adversary with extended arm. When a man so holds his weapon it is, it appears, impossible for the other man to wound him. At the same time it is said to be advisable to develop great suppleness of leg and ankle so as to be able to leap back, still holding one's point extended, in the event of the other man's rushing forward with such impetuosity as possibly to break down one's guard. It was further explained to me, that if whilst leaping back I could also dig forward with my sword, most satisfactory results might be hoped for (for me, *not* for the other man)."

It was disappointing to Mr. Sherard, after gaining much proficiency in leaping backwards while digging forward with his point, to find that his antagonist would only fight with pistols.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RIVERS OF FRANCE

Broadly speaking, one half of France is mountainous, and the other flat or undulating. All the mountains are on the eastern half, the high grounds of Normandy and Brittany being scarcely more than hills. The whole country might, for some purposes, be considered as an inclined plane, for in travelling from the Alps on the eastern frontiers to the Atlantic coast the altitudes (omitting the valley of the Rhone) are constantly decreasing. Thus, with the exception of the Rhone, which carries the snow-waters of the Bernese and Pennine Alps, the Vosges and the Jura chains, into the Mediterranean, the waters of nearly the whole of the more habitable three-quarters of the country drain westwards to the Bay of Biscay and the English Channel. Most of this immense reticulation of river and stream

is included in the three great systems of the Seine, the Loire, and the Garonne. The Adour drains the triangle between the Pyrenees and the Garonne; the Charente waters the Plain of Poitou between the Garonne and the Loire, but both are of small account in comparison to the vast areas included in the basins of the great rivers.

Both the Rhone and the Garonne are of foreign birth, the first beginning life at the foot of the great Rhone Glacier in Switzerland, feeding on her snows and glaciers all the year round, and the second rising in a Spanish valley of the Pyrenees.

The Loire, the longest of her rivers, is, however, entirely a possession of France. It is, like the Seine, a cause of very much anxiety on account of its inconstancy. At one season of the year it inundates large areas with its superabundance, and at another it is capable of running so low that only mere streams flow between the sand-banks. So unfortunately situated is the city of Tours in times of flood that it has found it necessary to surround itself with a protective dyke. The chief cause of sudden inundations is when the flood-waters of two or three tributaries

THE CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE ON THE LOIRE.

conspire to pour in their contributions to the main channel simultaneously, and only when these headstrong young things are held in check will there be any hope of a fairly regular level of water in the main course. Two centuries ago (1711) the need for curbing the flood-waters was recognised so clearly that a dam was constructed at Pinay, a village 18 miles above Roanne. It held up 350 to 450 million cubic feet of water, and has been very successful in maintaining the supply of water in the river-bed during seasons of drought, as well as checking the violence of the floods. In recent times three other dams have been built, two of them near the busy industrial centre of St. Étienne, but until several others have been constructed the flood-waters cannot be held in check.

Its immense length of 625 miles takes the Loire through ten departments, but the changes of scenery are not so remarkable as those of the Rhone. The source is in the Cevennes, about 4500 feet above sea-level, on the east side of the Gerbier de Jonc, and almost in sight of the Rhone. Through Haute Loire in the marvellously picturesque region of dead volcanoes near Le Puy-en-Velay it takes its course northwards, flowing at

the foot of basaltic cliffs and chestnut-clad slopes. On commanding spurs ruined castles are perched in most romantic fashion, and if it were not for their painful inaccessibility, the demand among the wealthy for these little strongholds of the Middle Ages would run up their value to astonishing figures.

The action of water in the past has been vastly more energetic in the Auvergnes and the Cevennes in the ages since their masses of plutonic rock were produced than at the present day, for the scoria and the general debris of seismic disturbance has been so much eroded that the throats of volcanoes filled with the last product of the immense heat below here and there stand out stripped of their cones. One of the most remarkable of these phenomena is to be seen at Le Puy. This strange *aiguille* has been crowned with a beautiful Romanesque chapel for some nine centuries, and it is just possible that a Roman temple stood there at an earlier date.

In the neighbourhood of St. Étienne the Loire is considered to be navigable. It traverses the alluvial plain of Forez, the mountains of that name to the west separating it from the basin

of its great tributary the Allier, which takes a roughly parallel course and joins it just below Nevers. If rivers could express their feeling by other means than overproduction and strikes, the Allier would no doubt say something forcible as to the ascendency of its neighbour, whose claims to be the parent stream are open to question.

Nearly all the way through this plain of Forez the Loire, in fine weather, resembles a ribbon of fairest blue threaded through lace of exquisite delicacy, for it is bordered by trees growing close to the water-side, and only now and then does the band of blue show an uninterrupted surface. Lower down bare red hills are encountered, through which the river has forced its way to the plain in which stands the town of Roanne, after which its course is less picturesque for a time. This is perhaps a scarcely accurate statement, for picture-making qualities with trees, cattle, and distant hills are scarcely ever absent, but there is a certain monotony in the scenery such as one can hardly find on the Thames or the Wye. From Nevers to Orleans there are no towns on the river, which gradually turns its course to the west, flowing

exactly in that direction at Orleans, where its ample width adds much interest and charm to a very much modernised city. Its habit of flooding, and so causing immense damage over large areas, has made it necessary to construct very formidable dykes, which now protect the country it traverses between La Martinière and Nantes. Between Orleans and Tours, where embankments do not exist, the writer has seen the cream-coloured flood-waters foaming and swirling past trees, fences, and hay-stacks over large areas of the Sologne. Here and there it has been almost impossible to see any indications of the usual river-bed, and so level is the country to the south in the neighbourhood of Beaugency that there seems nothing to check the floods for several kilomètres from the river. On these occasions one trembles on account of the danger to which the thirteenth-century bridge at Beaugency, patched, and in part rebuilt, is hourly exposed. It is the oldest bridge on the Loire.

Below Blois embankments contain the river, and the roadway on that which defends the north side provides the charming riverside drive to Amboise and Tours familiar to all who have visited the romantic *châteaux* of Touraine. The

average rise of the river in flood is 14 feet, and these dykes are quite equal to this task, but when, as in 1846 and 1856, the Loire raised its surface to over 22 feet, even these banks were useless. With dredging, embanking, and dam construction the river is being gradually harnessed, but there is still much to be done before riverside towns can contemplate the rapid melting of snow in the mountains without the gravest anxiety.

An upper course in a country of impervious rock means that the volume of water is not reduced by absorption, and the difficulties of the river are increased when it encounters the tertiary beds of the formation to which Paris gives its name. In this soft soil the Loire gathers up great quantities of detritus, which it deposits farther down, producing the sand-banks which cost the communities large sums to remove.

If the middle part of its course is not very interesting, the Loire removes that reproach between Orleans and its mouth. Its waters, and those of some of its shorter tributaries, reflect the towers and crenellated walls of some of the most remarkable and interesting of all the *châteaux* of France. Blois, the scene of the murders of the

Duc de Guise (who had instigated the Massacre of St. Bartholomew) and of his brother the Cardinal of Lorraine; Amboise, with its great tower, containing a spiral roadway for carriages and the courtyard in which Mary Stuart had, in 1560, been the swooning witness of a most appalling massacre of 1200 Huguenot prisoners, the Duc de Guise refusing to listen to her entreaties that they should be spared; Chenonceaux, the scene of many a royal hunting party, and the possession for a time of Diane de Poitiers, and Chaumont, which Catherine de Medici obliged Diane to take in exchange; Langeais, where rich furnishings of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance bring one into the very atmosphere of the poignard and of deadly intrigue; and Angers, with its seventeen round towers, begun by Philippe Auguste, are all eloquent of the romantic age of French history, of human passion, of love, hate, and despair.

It would not be easy to think offhand of any river of similar length and importance whose course shows such amazing dilatoriness as that of the Seine. The statue of a nymph placed at its source by the city of Paris is only 250 miles from the sea in a direct line, but the river seems

to have an unconquerable desire to postpone the hour when it is swallowed up by the English Channel, and by turning out of its normal direction, northwards or southwards, every few miles it has dug for itself a channel 482 miles in length. Such sinuosities on the course of a great river might be called undignified, if one could not point to that part of the course of the Moselle that lies between Trèves and Coblentz, and to the Ebro in the middle part of its journey between Saragossa and the sea. The increased friction at the numerous sharp curves prevents the flood-waters from getting away with the rapidity the Parisians sometimes desire, and this is partly responsible for the serious damage done in the capital when circumstances combine to send down an abnormal quantity of water from the higher tributaries. In January 1910 the height of the river above the normal was 24 feet, and the racing waters swirled against the key-stones of the bridges. But if the Seine misbehaves itself at intervals,[1] its average flow is so steady that its navigability is greater than the other important rivers. This excellent quality

[1] Great risings of the Seine occurred in 1658, 1740, 1799, 1802, 1876, and 1883.

is due to the fact that about three-quarters of the basin (an area of some 30,000 square miles) is formed of permeable deposits, and consequently a vast absorption is constantly taking place. The waters subtracted in this way are given back by the perennial springs supplied by the saturation of different strata. In rainless summer weather the first two or three dozen miles of the river frequently dry up, and only from Châtillon is it a permanent river. Tributaries of importance then begin to flow in. The Aube and the Yonne are followed by the Loing and the Essonne, and just before Paris the confluence with the Marne takes place. At the door of the last-mentioned river, longer than the Seine by 31 miles, is laid much of the blame for the volume of the floods. Its source is in the Plateau de Langres not many miles to the north-east of the Seine. Rich pasture-lands broken with long lines of tall-stemmed trees and brown-roofed villages are typical of the scenery of the main river and its tributaries above Paris. The painter who loves to be in the midst of opulent nature is happy here. Quaint groups of tall trees, whose foliage in the fall of the year turns to those delicate yellow greens and subtle browns that are a never-failing joy to those with

CHATEAU GAILLARD AND A LOOP OF THE SEINE.

seeing eyes, are everywhere arranged in some delightful scheme in which reflections in smooth oily waters add a double charm to the scene.

It is not until Paris has been left behind that the river begins to wash the bold white ramparts of the cretaceous beds. In and out of the deeply indented front the meandering river takes its way, on the right bank a wall of gleaming white cliffs and on the left green savannahs stretching to a far and level horizon. In many places the escarpments of chalk have the characteristics of ruined drum towers, of barbicans, and of broken curtains, so that when Richard Cœur-de-Lion's "*fillette d'un an*," the Château Gaillard which he caused to be built with such incredible speed, comes into view, it is at first difficult to believe that it is anything more than a still more realistic natural effect. From the high ground that commands the *château* one looks over one of the giant loops of the river, hemmed in by green-topped cliffs of the same marine deposits that form Gris Nez and the curious caves of Étretat, as well as the white cliffs of Albion. At one's feet are the still very perfect ruins of a castle that stood on the frontier of England's possessions in France seven centuries ago, and lower still is

the little town of Le Petit Andely huddled for protection at the base of the castle cliff.

Farther west, where the cliffs fall away, stands that historic city of France—Rouen, the ancient capital of Normandy. It is a port, for the Seine at this point becomes navigable for fair-sized sea-going steamers, and one may watch the unloading of china clay from Cornwall among the various imports carried directly to the quays.

Possibly the waterway to the sea was looked upon with little joy by the inhabitants of the city during the ninth and tenth centuries, when at any time, and without much warning, the shallow-draught vessels of the Vikings might appear on the river. How these bloodthirsty pirates came and came again in spite of strenuous resistance, heavy losses, and much Dane-geld, is a terrible chapter in the story of the Seine. How the night sky became copper-coloured under the furnace glow of burning houses, churches, and monasteries, is a picture which no historian of the river can fail to put into vivid words. Long ago, however, Rouen recovered from the disasters inflicted by the Northmen, and those who wander through her picturesque streets can find traces of buildings

MONT BLANC REFLECTING THE SUNSET GLOW.

that came into existence not very long after this period.

A rare type of steel bridge spans the Seine at Rouen. It consists of a travelling platform, large enough to take horses and carts, and all the usual load of a ferry-boat, which is slung from a light framework connecting two tall lattice steel towers. This curious achievement of modern engineering and the very tall iron flèche of the cathedral form the salient features of all distant views of the city.

Some of the peninsulas carved by the vagaries of the river are entirely given up to forest, and for many miles dark masses of trees extend to the southern horizon. Dykes hold the river to its course below Rouen. Before they were built it was impossible for vessels of 20-feet draught to navigate the river except under exceptional conditions. A notable feature of the lower reaches is the bore which occurs at every tide and reaches its maximum height of about 8 feet in the neighbourhood of Caudebec, where enterprising watermen entice the visitor into their boats to enjoy a natural water-show that quite eclipses the artificial thrills of the "Earl's Court" order.

Beautiful and historic buildings are thickly strewn along the lowest reaches of the Seine. The ruined abbey of Jumièges, where Edward the Confessor was educated, raises its lofty Norman towers high above the trees at the southern end of a big loop; the monastery of St. Wandrille, which is now converted into a private house and became the home of Maeterlinck a few years ago, is in a pretty valley leading from the river; Caudebec, with its glorious Gothic church and romantic old streets, stands on the right bank and has a sunny quay, and an open view across the sparkling waters, the opulent level pastures, and the belts of forest beyond; Lillebonne is the *Julia Bona* of Roman times, and has important remains of a Roman theatre, besides the castle, in whose great hall—alas! no longer existing—William the Norman announced to a great gathering of leading men his project of invading England; Tancarville Castle, with its prominent circular tower, is reflected in the broadening waters nearer the estuary, where Harfleur looks across to Honfleur, and both seem to dream of the days when their great neighbour Le Havre was not.

Being an entirely French river, the Loire has

been described first in this chapter; the Seine followed, being a smaller river, although of more commercial importance. Its basin, it should be mentioned, is not entirely French, some of its water being taken from Belgium. Of the two great rivers of foreign birth the Rhone is of the greater importance. It has a drainage area of close upon 38,000 square miles, and is the greatest river of all those that pour their waters directly into the Mediterranean. Besides this the Rhone is numbered in that distinguished group composed of the greatest of the rivers of Europe. More than any of the rivers of France it stands out as a big factor in history. One thinks of Hannibal with his host and his elephants faced by the swiftness and breadth of its flow; of the terrible struggle of the Romans with the Cimbri and Teutones on its banks; of St. Bénézet in the twelfth century copying the methods of the Roman architect of the Pont du Gard, and accomplishing what had never been done before, *i.e.* the construction of a stone bridge that could resist the onslaught of the flood-waters for centuries. Four of the big elliptical arches still stand, seemingly as strong as the day they were erected, and above one of the piers rises the little

Romanesque bridge chapel where the body of the good builder was buried.

The source of the Rhone is fitting for such a mighty waterway. It begins life as a torrent that pours from the foot of the great Rhone Glacier, 5909 feet above sea-level. It is now ascertained that it is the glacier itself from under which it emerges which gives birth to the river, and not the warm springs which issue from the ground at the point formerly reached by the glacier. Very early on its course another glacier-fed torrent adds its waters to the Rhone, which foams and rages through a gorge of typical Alpine grandeur. The exuberance of its youth is maintained by the torrents that feed its adolescent stages. It falls more than 3600 feet in less than thirty miles from its source, joined at frequent intervals by companions born of ice and snow, such as the Eginen, the Binna, and the Massa, a child of the Aletsch Glaciers. Below Brieg comes the Saltine, and then follows a quiet stretch, when the growing river passes through a stretch of alluvium—a dull period, a first governess, as it were, to a high-spirited youth—where floods are frequent. Below the old town of St. Maurice the river is confined within the

EVIAN LES BAINS. ON LAKE GENEVA.

narrow gorge that forms the western entrance of the Vallais, and it emerges from this gateway to Switzerland to flow across the marshy plain that was formerly the south-eastern end of the Lake of Geneva. Year by year the debris of the Bernese and the Pennine Alps is washed down by the tireless waters, and the date is approximately ascertainable when the lake will have ceased to exist. That will be a sad day for the Rhone, for it is through the filter-like action of the lake that the river flows forth freed from its burden of detritus, and Byron's " blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone " will describe a river whose character has changed for ever, unless the hand of man erects barriers in its course, and so introduces periods of artificial repose. But France to-day does not receive from Switzerland the gift of a river in its unsullied youth, for not long after it has passed from the lake it is contaminated by an untutored glacier-bred youth fresh from the Mont Blanc range, whence it has carried down much solid matter. For a certain distance the two rivers do not recognise one another, the waters refusing to mix, but propinquity brings its familiar result and justifies the copy-book maxim concerning evil companionship.

All through the long journey to Lyons the Rhone preserves the character of an uncivilised mountain-bred river, of small service to commerce or communication, although it is termed " navigable " from a point between Le Parc and Pyrimont. It must be said in defence of the river that the circumstances of its path in life do not tend towards the restful stability beloved of commerce. No sooner does it enter France than it is obliged to fight its way through a constricted channel between the Crédo and the Vuache, and gorge succeeds gorge for the greatest part of the distance between Geneva and Lyons. And who is there possessing any love for untrammelled nature who does not love the river's wild moods, its impetuosity, its generosity, and its reckless enthusiasm. By the time it has reached the great city of Lyons it has, however, subdued its wild ways, for having come within sight of the beautiful Saône it passes through the city on a sedately parallel course, and very soon they are wedded. For the rest of its life—a distance of 230 miles—the Rhone is a hard-working member of society, carrying day by day the manufactures of Central France down to the ancient " middle sea." It was the little time of engagement, the

THE CHAPEL ON THE BRIDGE OF ST BENEZET, AVIGNON.

brief interval before the marriage with the Saône was consummated, that produced the peninsula whereon the second city of France was founded, and gave it a situation of the greatest security in unsettled times. No doubt the Segusiani, who are generally mentioned as the earliest people to occupy the tongue of land, had had predecessors on the same spot, but the fogs of prehistoric times prevent one from knowing much of the settlement before the Roman had reached the confluence of the rivers. Then the mists roll away, and one has a vision of Agrippa making it the centre of four great roads; Augustus is seen giving the city a senate and making it the place of annual assembly of representatives from the sixty cities of Gallia Comata. Besides conferring these distinctions, the reign of Augustus saw the building of temples, aqueducts, and a theatre. In A.D. 59, during the reign of the half-demented Nero, the city was burnt and afterwards rebuilt on grander lines. Great buildings succeeded one another until the two rivers must have reflected as fine a city as could be found within the Roman Empire. But the unsettled centuries of the Dark Age of Europe brought successive waves of destructive invasion to *Lugdunum*, and for evidences

of the Roman period of the city it is necessary to go to the museum, where, however, the Gallo-Roman objects are numerous and of the greatest importance.

Farther down its course the great river's swift-flowing flood has on its banks the towns of Vienne, Valence, Avignon, Tarascon, and Arles, all by a curious chance on the left bank, although at Avignon and Tarascon there are sister towns on the opposite side, and Arles has a suburb across the water. Vienne and Arles still boast notable Roman structures, and Orange and Nîmes, as well as the Gard, the last tributary the river receives before entering the period of its dotage in the Carmargue, preserve vast Roman buildings at no great distance from the Rhone. It is just possible that the great part this river has played in the making of France might have received a far less adequate recognition had these visual tokens of the days of imperial Rome vanished as did so many others.

In its journey southwards from Lyons the character of the country traversed by the Rhone undergoes remarkable changes, and after Valence there is a decidedly southern aspect in the landscapes. The olive begins to appear, the

vine is cultivated on all sides, and dark lines of cypresses become conspicuous. From Avignon the dusty limestone country extends across Provence to the sea, and the arid sun-baked hills terraced here and there for vineyards, the lines of sentinel cypresses, and the constant presence of the olive are the chief features of scenery that might be in Turkey, in Asia, or the Holy Land. And yet this river began life in an Alpine glacier and passed its middle age in the fertile lands of west-central France. The delta of the Rhone is a huge triangular area enclosed between the Grand Rhone and the smaller branch it throws off near Arles. It is called the Carmargue, and is a flat waste only cultivated at the river sides, and in certain patches helped by irrigation. Almost treeless in great portions, and exposed to the fierce mistral that blows its cold Alpine breath upon the delta whenever the mood arises, it is surprising to find any towns or villages in the whole district. Yet Aigues Mortes and St. Gilles, and a few villages, keep alive under the most adverse conditions. Below Arles, to the east of the river, and extending to the Étang de Berre, is the stony plain of La Crau, and there too, in spite of the climatic discomforts and lack of soil,

two or three villages have come into existence along the main road between Arles and Aix-en-Provence. The Crau is probably more the work of the Durance than of the Rhone, which has deposited its burden of ice-carried boulders in the Lake of Geneva for ages, while the Durance in its comparatively short course from the Maritime Alps has no filtering vat, and in its periods of flood has forced millions of large stones down to the Rhone delta, gradually building up a barrier between itself and the sea, and necessitating a junction with the Rhone just below Avignon. When the sun beats down on the level waste of stones, whose depth averages from 30 to 45 feet, such heat is produced that a mirage is a not uncommon result. Any explanation for such a remarkable number of stones accumulated in one place was so hard to be found in early days that it was necessary to resort to the supernatural, and Strabo records the legend that it was Zeus who bombarded with these projectiles the Ligurian tribesmen who attacked the early Phoenician traders and colonisers of the mouth of the Rhone.

The Garonne, the last of the four great rivers of France, is the least interesting. As already

CAP MARTIN, NEAR MENTONE.

mentioned it is of foreign birth, its head-waters being in the Maladetta chain of peaks in a Spanish portion of the Pyrenees, and the river has traversed about 30 miles before it enters France through the *cluse* of the Pont du Roi. One of the two torrents in which the river begins its life plunges into a cavity in the rock, known as the Trou du Taureau, and does not appear again for two and a half miles. The Rhone also had formerly a small subterranean experience in its upper course, but the roof of rock has been destroyed.

The course of the river is roughly north-westward until it reaches the formidable plateau of Lannemezan, where it is turned sharply to the east, carrying with it the waters of the Neste, a considerable stream fed by the snows of Mont Perdu and its big neighbours. In this part of its course the scenery is exceedingly fine. Before the snows have melted off the mountains there are always the pale blue-grey peaks flecked with sunny patches, and slopes forming a magnificent background to dark wooded hills full of purples and ambers, and in spring the more subtle browns turning to yellow and the palest suspicion of green. Immense views are obtained from the Lannemezan plateau, the frontier mountain-range

stretching away east and west in a most imposing perspective of white peaks.

On its eastward course the Garonne passes the little town of St. Gaudens, whose name is derived from a Christian boy who was martyred in 475 by Euric, king of the Visigoths. St. Martory, the next town, spans the river with a bridge guarded by a formidable eighteenth-century gateway which Arthur Young thought could have been built for no other purpose than to please the eye of travellers. After this the westward tilt of France begins to assert itself, and the river works northwards to the city of Toulouse, where it gradually turns towards the west. Toulouse, while owing much to its river, does not forget the ill-turns it has received from its mountain-born waterway, which carried away the suspension bridge of St. Pierre in 1855, and twenty years later, in a disastrous flood, demolished the bridge of St. Michel and 7000 houses in the Faubourg St. Cyprien, while about 300 people were drowned. This suburb is on the left bank, and its situation on the inner side of the curve made by the river as it passes through the city makes it peculiarly liable to suffer from floods. The Pont Neuf, occupying a central

position, was built about the middle of the sixteenth century by the sculptor Nicholas Bachelier, whose arches have proved capable of resisting the angry moods of the Garonne until the present day. He adorned with his work many of the churches and mansions of Toulouse.

For the remainder of its course the river keeps to a north-westerly direction, and passing along the northern edge of the plateau which diverted its course, it absorbs all the rivers that flow from it. There is no other town of any consequence until the great port of Bordeaux is reached. This is not many miles from the mouth of the Garonne, for when the Dordogne adds its flood to the longer river the wide tidal estuary called the Gironde has been entered. It is scarcely fair on the Dordogne to call it a tributary of the Garonne when it does not join that river until it has entered the broad waterway common to both, but it is undoubtedly a part of the Garonne system. With the exception of the town of Bergerac—a place of no importance and of less interest—the Dordogne has only one other town on its banks, the little port of Libourne at its mouth where the wines of the locality are shipped.

The Adour and its important tributary the Gave de Pau figured conspicuously in Wellington's successful operations against Marshal Soult in the concluding period of the Peninsular War, and it was during the siege of Bayonne by Sir John Hope, while the Duke was following Soult towards Orthez, that the famous bridge of boats was built across the river below the town. The construction of this bridge entailed enormous risks in getting the boats across the bar at the river's mouth, and its successful accomplishment was considered one of the greatest engineering feats achieved by the British army during this period.

THE CHATEAU OF CHENONCEAUX.

From a watercolour by Mr. A. H. Hallam Murray.

CHAPTER IX

OF THE WATERING-PLACES

French sea-coast watering-places fall easily into two groups—those of the English Channel and those of the Mediterranean. The first may be subdivided into the fashionable places between Deauville and the Belgian frontier and the go-as-you-please resorts of Brittany. There are long intervals between the different resorts, and few would dream of wandering along the coast from one to another; but on the Mediterranean the Riviera is almost one continuous chain of watering-places from St. Raphaël to Mentone.

In the early days, when English doctors were beginning to recommend their more wealthy patients to winter on the French Riviera, there was little beyond the sunshine, the equable climate, the colour and the loveliness of the scenery to attract the visitor, and what more,

one asks, could any rational being who has gone away with congenial companions require? A visit to the Riviera amply answers such a frivolous question. In the early days, visitors and tired politicians, perhaps of the type of Lord Brougham, or less strenuous people to whom the fogs of the northern winter were a periodic menace, found no hotels much above the average of the country inn, and villas were not. Obviously these things had to be provided, and now from Cannes to Garavan, which is within a shout of the Italian frontier, there is a very nearly continuous chain of villas and hotels. And where villas are too close together to permit the erection of a newly projected *Hôtel Splendide*, a terrace is constructed a little higher up the face of the sea-front, and the new building offers to its guests finer views and less noise than those who stay lower down. Villas are pleasant enough, but they can become dull to those with a passion for amusement, a desire to escape from themselves or whatever one cares to call the disease, and a hotel to such offers very little more. Besides, one is practically driven to bed at a quarter to ten, so a casino is a sheer necessity. Then no one who wishes to be healthy can be so for long without exercise,

ST. MALO FROM ST. SERVAN.

and a golf-course must be provided. This is a difficulty on the French Riviera only overcome at Cannes, where the alluvial Plaine de Laval near La Napoule offers suitable ground. Everywhere else the mountainous nature of the coast vetoes the game. Lawn-tennis, however, is quite possible even where steep slopes reach down to the sea. The race-course, too, has been found a necessity for existence, and it has been provided. The casino offers gambling and music and theatrical performances. But this is not enough, there must be a theatre too. A Battle of Flowers is a relief to the monotony of the days, and at Nice such an extravagance is indulged during the Carnival, the climax of the season's manufactured gaiety. Besides all this there are regattas, motor weeks, pigeon-shootings, exhibitions of hydroplaning. . . . The list of distractions is now so enormous that the visitor almost needs a visit to one of the quiet spots beyond Genoa to rest before returning to the gaieties of the season in Paris or London.

The English were the discoverers of the French Riviera from the health-resort standpoint. They wrote books describing fine air and the attractions of this wonderful coast, and the social distinction

of some of the writers assured an attentive audience. Lady Blessington penned an account of her journey along the Riviera in 1823, which reveals a condition of things as far removed from the luxury of to-day as are the shores of Patagonia. To journey from Nice to Florence was then more or less an adventure. "The usual route by land," she writes, "is over the Col di Tenda, and *via* Turin, but this being impracticable owing to the snow, and as we had a strong objection to a voyage in a *felucca*, we determined to proceed to Genoa by the route of the Cornice, which admits of but two modes of conveyance, a *chaise à porteurs*, or on horseback, or rather on muleback." The Lady Blessingtons of to-day travel on an excellently engineered and, for the most part, a dust-free road, in the luxurious ease provided by the builders of the modern motor-car *de luxe*. The six-cylindered engine purrs so softly that the sound of the waves on the rocks beneath the road is not lost, and even the faint smell of petrol is overcome by the exquisite productions of Roget et Cie.

Hyères stands quite apart from the long chain of fashionable resorts. It is a picturesque old town separated from the sea by two or three

miles of salt marshes, and only ranks as a watering-place on account of the proximity of Costebelle, where modern hotels perched picturesquely on the wooded hills known as the Montagnes des Oiseaux look across the Iles d'Or to the beautiful Maure Mountains. The villages perched on the face of the cliffs, and those standing on the intervals of alluvial shore along the coast of Les Maures, are typical of the whole Riviera before the leisured and wealthy classes of the western nations began to make their annual incursions. East of the valley at whose mouth stands Fréjus, dozing in the midst of its eye-filling evidences of importance in Roman times, is St. Raphaël, with its hotel quarter known as Valescure, high among the pines on the first slopes of the densely wooded Estérel Mountains. Healthfulness is still the main attraction here; but those who do not thirst for distracting gaiety love the sweet-smelling solitudes and the bays where the porphyry rocks, purple-red as the name implies, are overhung by masses of dark pines, and bathed by waters that reflect sky, trees, and rocks in a wonderful confusion of strong colour, reminiscent of bays on the south Cornish coast. Hotels have appeared near the larger villages on the littoral of the

Estérels, but Nature is still free down to the splashing waves, and it is only when Cannes is reached that one is in the real Riviera atmosphere.

The first view of the sweeping coast-line between Cannes and the confines of Italy that suddenly unfolds itself as one goes eastwards on the coast road is one of surpassing loveliness, provided that the weather lives up to its honestly-earned reputation. A great sweep of sea of an exquisite, a tender, a most lovely blue fills half the scene. It is perhaps shaded here and there by clouds, and their shadows turn the blue to amethyst. There is a fringe of white along the low sandy shores of the Gulf of La Napoule. Farther off the coast becomes steep and clothed with a mantle of dark green foliage, speckled along its lower margin with creamy-white villas, while higher, the horizon is serrated with snow-capped peaks. As the coast recedes it becomes more lofty, the mountains coming to bathe their feet in the blue sea. There are islands and promontories faintly visible in the soft opalescent haze. Such is the first impression one obtains of a fairyland coast-line, which owing to various circumstances had to be discovered to the French people by foreigners. With their inherited instinct towards roving the

MONTE CARLO AND MONACO FROM THE EAST.

British have not even been able to keep to their own land when merely taking a little seaside holiday.

It might be said of the French that, apart from their dozen or more seaports, they were until recently in a state of comparative ignorance as to the nature of the wonderful coast-line of their country. It was only recently that any considerable proportion of the great French middle-class population acquired the habit of taking an annual holiday by the sea. The expense of such a migration is a big item in a small budget, and when undertaken it is the need for economy which makes the housekeeper prefer to take a house wherein she can provide for her own *ménage*, and avoid giving a landlady a living at her expense.

At first the seaside visits were of a very adventurous character, and little wooden châlets of a very temporary character were run up. They were placed in a most haphazard fashion where land was available. Gardens were not cultivated; and even when quite a number of these meretricious little seaside homes had gathered together at one spot, there was no attempt to produce the features regarded by the English as essentials. Instead of the pier with

its concert-room raised above the waves on barnacle-swollen iron pillars, the French build a casino. In it all forms of evening amusement are concentrated, and all the holiday life is to be found there after sunset. The esplanade, that most tiresome feature of all English seaside resorts, is only built when the place has become so matured that it begins to yearn for smartness. Possibly foreigners are the main cause of the promenade. On the Riviera, where it has been the aim of the municipalities and the hotel proprietors to study the habits of *les Anglais*, the esplanade is to be found at every resort, and it is probably only the overwhelming expense due to the precipitous nature of a very considerable proportion of the coast that has saved the Riviera from becoming one continuous promenade from Cannes to Mentone. Even if this were ever accomplished the irregularities of the coast are so pronounced that there would be few opportunities for those who abominate the sea-front of the Brighton type to complain. At Cannes the isolated mass of rock crowned by the picturesque "old town" effectually cuts the frontage to the sea in two, and at Nice the tabular rock in whose shadow ancient Nice grew, forms

MONT ST MICHEL AT HIGH TIDE.

an abrupt termination to the eastward end of the parade, the central portion of which is called the Promenade des Anglais, and there is situated a jetty to satisfy the tastes of the same patrons of "Paris by the Sea." Villefranche does not give any opportunity for producing sterile perspectives on account of the deep and narrow bay formed by the Cap du Mont Boron and the St. Jean peninsula. Beaulieu is little more than a fortuitous concourse of villas and hotels, and the only level ground is that occupied by the Corniche road.

The promontory of Monaco is entirely precipitous, but gardens on its outward side give shady walks and charming peeps of the distant coast. One side of the bay of Monaco is formed by the curving northern face of the tabular projection, and facing it are the creamy-white terraces of Monte Carlo, rising up to the blocks of equally brilliant red-roofed buildings terminating in the world-famed Casino, which stands at the apex of a small projection of the rocky shelf. The architecture of the Casino is of the commonplace "exhibition" type, and the gardens surrounding it support the parallel. Only the determination of man could have made the precipitous slopes of the mountainous sea-front produce

lawns and flowers and shady trees, for the heat of summer would destroy all but the hardiest forms of vegetation, unless artificial aids were employed. The colour of Monte Carlo is intensely brilliant on account of the immense reflecting surface of pinkish limestone rock that towers up some 1300 feet from the sea, and makes the place quite unique among watering-places. Strictly speaking one hardly has any right to include it in a description of French watering-places, for Monaco is an independent principality, and its area includes Monte Carlo and the intervening township of Condamine, which is packed in between the gaming metropolis and the *col* that separates Monaco's peninsula from the mainland.

Until 1856 the principality had no gambling halls, and it was not until 1858 that the Prince of Monaco laid the foundation stone of the existing Casino, the gaming-tables having been first set up within the walls of the old town. In a few years the annual income from the Casino ran up to £1,000,000, a sum of £50,000 being the Prince's share. So by playing down to the widespread instinct for gambling, one of the most unprofitable patches of coast has become in proportion to its area the most revenue-producing in the whole

world. It is a melancholy reflection that one of the most perfect spots on the Mediterranean for enjoying all the warmth of the winter sun should be so fatally contaminated by a cosmopolitan crowd of ne'er-do-weels of every grade of society. One sees all the world at Monte Carlo, for no one who passes along the Riviera can quite resist the desire to have a peep at a place of such notoriety. And so many come to Monte Carlo for this self-same purpose that the real habitués, the professionals and the "last-hopers," are rather lost sight of in the crowd of quite irreproachable people who half fill the concert-hall, and drift through the gaming-rooms throwing a few five-franc pieces on to the roulette tables "just to see what happens," or to experience the very edge of the strange fascination which leads men and women to fling away a competency in a fevered desire for wealth.

The two superimposed roads between Nice and Mentone known as the Upper and the Lower Corniche, are both laboriously engineered highways, possessing almost unrivalled charms. On the lower road there used to be a most serious disadvantage to the enjoyment of the scenery in the choking clouds of dust raised by every

passing vehicle. Motor-cars used to throw up such a smother of dust that it did not settle for some minutes, and in the interval fresh clouds would be produced. Tar has at last been brought to rescue the charms of the Lower Corniche from being completely destroyed. Trams grind and scream as they follow the constant curves of the road, and their presence robs it of any sense of repose. It is therefore more possible to enjoy the changing panorama of bay, cliff, and promontory, of brilliantly coloured waves in shadow and in sunshine from a seat in a car than on foot. An automobile, unless driven very slowly, is tiresome and tantalizing in such scenery. One can only compare the sensation of being flung through beautiful surroundings of this character at 30 miles an hour to being obliged to go through the galleries of the Louvre at a trot.

On the Upper Corniche the traffic is light, there are no trams, and dust is scarcely noticeable. The scenery is altogether on a greater scale. At certain spots one commands nearly the whole of the French Riviera at once. The sea is far below, and its nearer shores are almost invariably hidden. Whoever passes one on this lofty highway is fairly sure to have come there for pleasure,

business taking few along the high "cornice." Energetic folk from all the resorts within reach are to be found climbing up the steep zig-zag pathways to this splendid vantage-ground. Frenchmen in clothes suited for *le sport* or perhaps wearing the dark city type of jacket suit which so many adhere to even when holiday-making, Germans thoughtfully carrying their red Baedekers with them, and Englishmen of the retired military officer or I.S.O. type are all to be found enjoying or "doing" the Upper Corniche in the various manners of their widely differing temperaments. At La Turbie, where the remains of the huge monument to Caesar Augustus, the conquering emperor, still bulk prominently in the midst of the village, there is a funicular railway connecting the upper and lower roads, bringing the splendid air and scenery of the heights within reach of the infirm or the merely slack types of visitors.

The long winding descent from La Turbie to Mentone brings the two roads together opposite Cap Martin, a promontory densely grown with old and gnarled olives and masses of dark pines that come down to the water's edge. From beneath their shade one can look across the blue waves breaking into white along the curving

shore to Mentone's villas and hotels overtopped by its old town on a spur of the mountain slopes that rise sharply just behind. Although built at the mouth of two torrents, Mentone is sheltered by an imposing amphitheatre of lofty mountains, which very effectually screen it from the treacherous mistral, and it is this fact which has made it the most popular place for invalids on the whole of *la Côte d'Azur*. It is fortunate in having been spared the inflictions of overpowering perspectives of the Nice or Brighton order, and one can sit close to the shore under the shade of great eucalyptus trees free from the glare and the traffic of a big sea-front roadway of the stereotyped British pattern.

The eastern extension of Mentone, known as Garavan, is within a few minutes' walk of the Italian frontier, where the sea-coast resorts become more brightly coloured and have more architectural interest in their old quarters, the Ligurian type of compactly built walled town being scarcely recognisable in what remains of old Mentone.

Not only is the Riviera a land of winter sunshine, it is also one of the most sweetly-scented coasts in the world. The delicious fragrance of the lemon and the orange, when those trees are in

blossom, is often Nature's final lavish filling up of the cup of enjoyment to overflowing. And in the spring, when the northern sea-coast resorts are shivering before the icy winds that sweep down the Channel, this favoured coast has nasturtiums and other flowers that England does not see until late in summer, in their fullest blossom. France is indeed fortunate in its Mediterranean shore, of which Plato must have been thinking when he wrote :

> There the whole earth is made up of colours brighter far and clearer than ours ; there is a purple of wonderful lustre, also the radiance of gold, and the white which is in the earth is whiter than any chalk or snow.

Among the watering-places on the Channel the twin towns of Deauville and Trouville, separated only by the river Toques, are pre-eminent among the wealthiest and most fashionable of Parisians. Trouville has a longer season, but it is altogether outshone by its neighbour during the fortnight of the races in August, and during the quieter weeks of its season Deauville probably boasts more leaders of fashionable French society than any other coast resort. It is popularly believed that during the season one cannot smell the salt air off the sea at either of

these places on account of the scent used by its expensive visitors. This is more or less true of Étretat also, and possibly of Biarritz too, and no one who dreams of careless attire should come near these places during the season.

Both places possess splendid stretches of sand, and therefore bathing is safe, and one of the greatest attractions to visitors. The casinos are well adapted to the demands made upon them, and the villas include, among the various more temporary old-fashioned types, many that are quite charming.

Westward from Deauville is pretty little Cabourg, just beyond the mouth of the River Dive, where William the Norman assembled his army for the invasion of England. Here also the beach is of excellent sand, extending for four miles. The casino is, of course, a prominent feature, and there is a broad terrace, not far short of a mile in length, raised above the beach. Between Cabourg and the mouth of the Orne one finds one of those embryo seaside places that are typical of the haphazard fashion in which French watering-places grow. It bears the curious name of Le Home-sur-Mer, and in its present stage of development is little more than

a railway-station and a collection of widely scattered and hurriedly-built villas, dumped anywhere along a sandy ridge.

After Deauville the seaside resort most patronised by the opulent is Étretat. It has none of the advantages of a sandy shore, and bathing from the steep shingly beach is often so dangerous that the authorities insist on securing intrepid bathers by rope around the waist. Good swimmers enjoy the depth of water to be found close to the shore, and have no fear of a buffeting by big rollers; but to the weak or timid the conditions are often forbidding, and on such days there are more early arrivals than usual at the first tee on the golf-course.

From the point of view of scenery Étretat holds a high position, its bold chalk cliffs adding enormously to the picturesqueness of the coast. Erosion produces very curious effects in the chalk, boring vast cavities with wonderfully domed roofs, and leaving natural arches and projecting ribs that sometimes suggest the colossal legs of a white elephant. The arch springing from the central projection of the cliffs, known as the Porte d'Aval, is approachable from the east at low tide, and a nearer view can be

obtained of an isolated pillar called the Aiguille d'Étretat.

There are lofty cliffs at Fécamp and a curving bay, with a casino in the centre and the mouth of the Fécamp River to the east; but it cannot claim to be so much the resort of fashion as its western neighbour. The town has a busy port and all the picturesqueness contributed by the fishing-boats that go to the cod or herring fisheries. There is, as well, the abbey church and the Benedictine distillery with its interesting museum, but such features do not attract many holiday-makers, who are looking for amusement of the entirely social order.

St. Valery-en-Caux has a beach made up of both sand and shingle, the upper portion of the bathing-ground being exceedingly stony. On the lower level children bathe in safety, and the joy of shrimping is indulged in by visitors of all ages.

A little to the east is Veules, where the cliffs are low and of rather loose earth, and the beach is not ideal for bathing. It is popular with the people of Rouen, being conveniently placed and inexpensive. The shrimp here too offers a fund of excitement to the families who are usually content with the most simple of amusements,

THE VEGETABLE MARKET, NICE.

provided they can drop into the casino after dinner.

Dieppe, owing to its connection with England by the Newhaven steamers, is popular among English visitors, who can run over for a day or two with the minimum of trouble and expense. The broad sunny Plage, the casino to which one is free all day on payment of three francs, and the Établissement des Bains keep the place very full of life and gaiety throughout the season; but one does not expect to find there the people who may be seen at Étretat or Deauville. Possessing a busy and not unpicturesque port, an historic fifteenth-century *château*, and a beautiful Gothic church, it is surprising to find the sea-front so entirely suggestive of one of the newly developed resorts. To the north-east is Tréport, an interesting and picturesque little coast town, with the usual requirements for bathing and summer visitors. Along the top of the great bank of shingle are the dressing-sheds, with wooden steps at intervals leading down to the beach. Those who have any interest in history find the proximity of the famous old town of Eu a great attraction, but golf acts with such magnetic force over the average Anglo-Saxon that such con-

siderations do not often weigh in the choice of a holiday resort. The French have only lately begun to know the joys and the profound dejections of golf; it is not yet a necessary adjunct to a seaside resort. Where there are golf-courses it is mainly British capital that brings them on to the sand-dunes. Le Touquet is very cosmopolitan, but it could hardly exist a month without its English patrons. It is one of those places which come into existence with the wave of the capitalist's wand. He says, in effect, "Let us make on this waste an ideal health resort, let us erect hotels, casinos, theatres, and to these add golf-courses, croquet lawns, lawn-tennis courts, and polo grounds; we will have rides through the forest and bathing facilities on this shore, and we will advertise until the whole world knows that we have made this place." And, having spoken, everything desired straightway comes to pass, so that one reads on a leaflet concerning this newly arrived resort such items as these :—

10 hotels.
2 casinos.
2 theatres.
10 miles of forest rides.
A polo ground.
2 golf-courses.
3 croquet lawns.
17 lawn-tennis courts.
3 miles of sandy beach.
Drag-hounds.

Paris Plage is the newly-built town, brought into existence through the needs and attractions of Le Touquet, Étaples being a little too far away to answer this purpose.

Farther north is Boulogne, with its own casino and promenade and its village resorts, such as Hardelot, close at hand. So numerous, indeed, are the bathing-places of this type that it would be tiresome to even attempt a list of them all, but they all have their own devotees—French, English, and American—and any little villa along the coast of Normandy or Picardy may during the hot months be the temporary home of men and women whose names are household words on either side of the Channel.

Brittany is farther away from Paris and from England, and its charms are only beginning to be appreciated. With the exception of Dinard, there is no place that is expensive or smart in any sense. Some of the villages on the long and deeply indented coast-line have at least one good hotel, and if one is content with what the sea will provide in the way of amusement, the happiest of holidays may be spent there. Bathing, sailing, fishing, sketching, walking, exploring quaint villages, and seeing the curious social customs

that still live in this very Celtic corner of France, fill up endless days, and only those to whom none of these things appeal can be dull, provided the weather is tolerably fine.

Biarritz, down at the southern extremity of the French Atlantic coast, in the innermost corner of the Bay of Biscay, with its neighbour St. Jean de Luz, are far away from the two great groups of coast resorts. The first was popularised among both French and English on account of the frequent visits paid to it by King Edward VII. It was understood when *Le Roi Edouard* came to Biarritz that no one was to take any notice whatsoever of his presence. Cameras were promptly confiscated if any one attempted to snapshot the King or any of his friends, and it was in this way possible for the sovereign who loved to step down into the crowd, to forget the tedious functions of his office. After Sunday morning service he would stroll along the promenade with one or two friends in the most informal fashion, so that a chance British visitor who did not dream that he might at any moment rub shoulders with his sovereign would almost gasp with astonishment when he suddenly discovered that he had actually done so!

THE PYRENEES FROM NEAR PAMIERS.

Only at intervals does the sea give up its onslaught upon the rocks that form the coast at Biarritz, and one of the charms of the place is to be found in the magnificent displays given by the Atlantic. Thundering waves rear themselves in great walls of green, marble-veined with foam, which fling themselves in a chaos of white upon the smooth, sandy shore of the Plage or the deeply indented promontory which contains the fishing port. The town is very modern, but is well built and extremely clean and pleasant in every way, the new streets being full of good houses in gardens that are something more than a patch of unmown grass.

Besides bathing, for which there are three *établissements*, there is golf and lawn-tennis, while the proximity of the Pyrenees gives opportunity for motor drives in the midst of deep valleys, whose vast slopes clothed with pine or box fall precipitously to torrential rivers. The whole country, too, is rich in memories of Wellington's successful completion of the Peninsular War. St. Jean de Luz was for a time his headquarters, the house he occupied being still in existence. Nearly all who stay at Biarritz go on to Pau, the inland winter resort close to, but not within the

actual embrace of the Pyrenees. English people visit both places mainly in the winter and spring. They make the season at those times, while French and Spanish visitors flood thither in the summer, putting up prices at that period of the year to a height not reached during the zenith of the English season. Almost every form of sport and open-air exercise can be enjoyed at Pau, and foxhounds meet regularly throughout the winter. The town is magnificently placed on the north side of the Gave de Pau, and the view it commands of the snowy range of peaks, with the deep and picturesque valleys leading up to them, is one of the finest possessions of this character to be found in any town of France.

THE GALERIE DES GLACES AT VERSAILLES.

CHAPTER X

ROMAN, ROMANESQUE, AND GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE IN FRANCE

In the wide range of its ancient and mediaeval architecture France stands next to Italy. Its Roman buildings are almost as fine as anything to be found in that country, its Gothic structures include some of the world's masterpieces, while in examples of the Renaissance only the country where the re-birth took place can rival her. England, which competes closely in the Romanesque and Gothic periods, is out of the running in the earlier epoch, and takes a very much lower position in the works that succeeded the death of the pointed style. Italy, the most formidable rival, is superior in its Roman remains, but inferior in its Gothic work. In the Renaissance, Italy, its home, stands easily first, and in works of the Byzantine period its possessions at Venice

and Ravenna leave the western nations far behind.

Prehistoric architecture is well represented in Brittany, where the vast scale of the Carnac lines —the Avenues of Kermario—dwarfs the British survivals on Salisbury Plain and Dartmoor. There are numerous dolmens and tumuli, containing chambers roughly constructed out of unhewn stones of the New Grange (Ireland) type, but there is nothing comparable to Stonehenge.

When one comes to the Roman period the remains are so splendid that many are satisfied with what they have seen in Provence, and do not feel impelled to see Rome before they die. Nîmes stands first among the towns of Provence for the splendour of the Roman structures it has preserved. Not only has it an amphitheatre which is more perfect than any other in existence, but its temple, dedicated to Caius and Lucius Caesar, adopted sons of the Emperor Augustus, between the first and the fourteenth year of the Christian era, is also the best preserved in the world. Having been used successively as a church, a municipal hall, and a stable, it is now a museum of Roman objects, and seems capable of standing for an unlimited time. Besides these most famous

THE ROMAN TRIUMPHAL ARCH AT ORANGE

structures there are two gateways, one of them bearing an inscription stating that it was built in the year 16 B.C. To the north of the town are Roman baths of wonderful completeness, and in their restored condition of very considerable beauty. Over them on the hill-top rises the Tour Magne, a Roman watch-tower which formed part of the defences of the city. Stretching across the deep and rocky bed of the river Gard, about 14 miles to the north, is the vast aqueduct which carried the water-supply of Nîmes across the obstruction caused by the river. The three superimposed tiers of arches filling the wide space make one of the most imposing of all the Roman works that have come down to the present time.

Arles is a serious rival to Nîmes. It has preserved its amphitheatre, built about the first century A.D. and large enough to hold an audience of 25,000 persons. The remains of its theatre, with two marble columns of its pro-scenium, which were utilised as a gallows in the Middle Ages, standing out among the fallen and dislodged stones, has preserved just enough of its form to be exceedingly impressive. In the disused church of St. Anne have been gathered a most remarkable collection of Roman sarco-

phagi, altars, and many other objects of richly sculptured stone, while in the Avenue des Alyscamps one may see the cemetery of Roman Arles just outside the city walls, dating from the reign of the Emperor Constantine. On the two sides of the avenue there are many stone sarcophagi, the larger ones, of which there are two or three dozen, having retained their lids. There are remains of the forum and a tower of Constantine's palace, built early in the fourth century.

Orange has a theatre which, now that the upper tiers of seats have been restored, has very much its original appearance. The immense stone wall, forming the back of the semicircular stage, is 118 feet in height and 13 feet thick. Stone was close at hand, making its construction easy, and the auditorium was hewn out of the limestone hill against which the theatre was built. There appears to have been a permanent roof of timber—a unique feature—for there are structural indications leading to such a conclusion, as well as signs of fire, which no doubt was the cause of its disappearance. In about A.D. 21 a very fine triumphal arch was erected at Orange, then known as *Arausio*, and this still

stands complete, save for the detrition on its surface caused by the weather and perhaps some rough handling in the Dark Ages. Very judicious restoration has given one a convincing idea of what is missing where the structure has not been overlaid with new work. St. Rémy has contrived to preserve a considerable portion of its triumphal arch, and close to it a remarkably perfect mausoleum, 50 feet in height. It is adorned with much sculpture like the archway, and both stand upon an exposed rocky plateau. There are, indeed, so many survivals of this period which one would like to mention that there would be no space to deal with any later age. Vienne, on the extreme confines of Roman Provincia, has its temple, rebuilt in the second century, converted into a Christian church in the fifth, and made more famous during the Revolution by the celebrating within its walls of the Festival of Reason. Remains of the city walls, of a theatre, of the balustrade of a fine staircase, of a pantheon, an amphitheatre, and a citadel are still to be seen. The Roman aqueduct, which supplied the city, restored in 1822, is still to some extent in use !

Périgueux is full of indications of its Roman buildings. The Tour de Vésone is in part a

Gallo-Roman temple, dedicated to Vesuna; the remains of the amphitheatre include much of the outer wall, in which are staircases, vomitoria, and the lower vaulting now partially exposed. At Lillebonne, mentioned in another chapter, are the carefully excavated remains of a theatre; at Carcassonne, at Narbonne, at Lyons, in Paris, and in other cities and towns, Roman foundations and many sculptured stones are full of significance, and of absorbing interest to the historian, the architect, and the archaeologist.

Following the age of Roman domination came those strangely fascinating centuries of disruption and destruction in which the outward influences of Rome slowly gave way before the westward march of the lower but healthier civilisation of the tribes of central and eastern Europe. When these new peoples had settled down among the older occupants of the country, they began to build permanent structures for themselves, and although there may have been some craftsmanship among them, they were unable to do more than make indifferent attempts to copy the architecture of the Roman era. The dark shadow that the irruptions caused to fall upon the face of Europe leaves the world in ignorance as to the fate of the archi-

tects, and stone masons who reared the noble works of Rome's supremacy in western Europe. It would appear that in the two or three centuries of uncertainty, if not of perpetual warfare and social chaos, no one had time or opportunity to do more than erect hurried fortifications of the crude type one sees in the Visigothic portions of town walls, such as those of Carcassonne. No architect could flourish under such conditions, and unless he migrated to the seat of the Eastern Empire opportunities for applying his knowledge were no doubt impossible to find. And at Constantinople a new development of architecture was taking place, in which the exterior was disregarded to a very considerable extent while internal decoration became extravagant, Byzantine art being dissatisfied unless every portion of walls and roof was richly ornamented and brilliant in colour. The profession of the architect being useless, the dependent handicraftsmen would inevitably die out, and thus from the sixth century, which is about the earliest date of any Romanesque building in France, one sees the crude efforts of the ill-trained sculptors to copy the ornament of the buildings that lay around them ruined or gutted. In many of the capitals that

were carved in these early centuries of Christian times, the volutes are half-hearted attempts to reproduce the Ionic order, with a tendency to stray into Corinthian foliation. From such very early buildings as the church of St. Pierre at Vienne, onwards to St. Trophîme at Arles, the crypts of Notre Dame du Port at Clermont-Ferrand and of St. Denis, Paris, until one reaches the great churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, such as the cathedral of Angoulême and the church of Notre Dame la Grande at Poitiers, one can see the steady development of a curious mixture of bastard Roman with the Byzantine style, upon which was growing a new individuality which burst into flower with the introduction of the pointed arch. In France this abandonment of the Roman semicircular arch came very gradually. Belonging to the transition stage are many fine buildings, in which group are the fine church at Poitiers just mentioned and the cathedral at Le Puy-en-Velay. The sculpture of this period reveals the very strong Byzantine influence prevailing, and if no other evidence existed this alone would demonstrate the debt western Europe owes to the rearguard of its civilisation.

FRENCH DESTROYERS.

The architecture of Normandy had its own peculiarities during the Romanesque period, but while these differences have entitled it to a separate name and classification, it is Romanesque influenced by the Northmen, and all through England the strong Byzantine influence was felt until the great expansion of new ideas began to outgrow the forms and ornament of the preceding centuries.

Two of the finest Norman Romanesque buildings are the great abbey churches built at Caen by William the Conqueror and his queen Matilda. The Abbaye aux Hommes, William's work, is not quite as it was when consecrated, but it is almost entirely a work of the Norman period. That there was a simplicity in the style at this period almost amounting to plainness is shown in the west front of William's church; while the Abbaye aux Dames, built about a quarter of a century later, shows a very great advance in the distribution and application of ornament both within and without. Another abbey church, that of St. Georges de Boscherville, built in the eleventh century by Raoul de Tancarville, is a more perfect and complete work of that period than any other in Normandy. With the excep-

tion of the upper portions of the western turrets and the broach spire, the whole church stands to-day as it was originally erected. In these large and not always very beautiful buildings, it is their association with a romantic period and the evidences they show of architectural evolution that provides the chief satisfaction to the informed visitor and the student.

A considerable portion of the abbey buildings that engirdle the summit of the rocky islet of Mont St. Michel belong to the Norman period, although much of the work is Gothic.

At St. Denis, outside Paris, one sees the beginnings of French Gothic. Clearly the builders regarded the new style as empirical, for there was obvious hesitation to plunge too far into a field of such considerable possibilities when the west front was designed. A little later than St. Denis is the cathedral of Noyon, another extremely interesting example of this period. Almost simultaneously came Chartres, but a disastrous fire in 1194 left little besides the towers and the west front. The rebuilding, however, which proceeded almost at once, was to a considerable extent completed by 1210, and this later work shows the Gothic style grown to all

the splendour which has perpetually satisfied and enthralled the minds of succeeding generations.

At this time building was proceeding all over Europe with wonderful vigour. The new style gripped the imaginations of all the western nations, and wherever sufficient funds were obtainable the monkish architects were enthusiastically producing designs which were steadily carried out in stone. In Paris Notre Dame was building all through the closing years of the twelfth century and the opening of the next; at Rouen, the cathedral having been burnt in 1200, half a century of building followed; the glories of Rheims and Amiens were materialising during the same period, and almost coeval is the vast cathedral of Beauvais, which was planned to eclipse that of Amiens in every respect. The ambitious intent of the designers of Beauvais was never consummated, and in the unfinished pile standing to-day one sees the failure to build a Titan among cathedrals.

All through the period known in England as Early English there is much similarity in design, as well as in ornament, on both sides of the Channel, but signs of divergence begin to appear with the development of decorative skill during

the English Decorated Period, and when the French architect had reached his highest achievement in the subtly beautiful lines of the Flamboyant style, the English craftsmen, after a few brief moments in the same direction, turned about and produced their unique development in the style known as Perpendicular. Here and there in France there are suggestions of the restraint of the last phase of English Gothic, but they are almost as rare as the Flamboyant style in England. At Evreux and at Gisors one sees remarkable examples of the work of the Renaissance in the reconstruction of the west ends of these Gothic churches. The contrast of styles is, however, too marked to allow even the hand of Time to remove the challenge which the two styles fling at one another.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATIONAL DEFENCES

About the year 1909 the administration of the French navy had fallen into a scandalous state of chaos. Battleships were so long in building that the type was beginning to be superseded before the vessels were commissioned. There was a story circulated not long ago to the effect that some one who enquired of the widow of a workman at Cherbourg what her son was going to do for a livelihood received the reply that he would work on the *Henri IV.* as his father had done. The story may not be quite true, but it indicates what people were thinking at the time. British ships are not infrequently completed within a year of their launch, but the *Dupetit Thouars* which took the water in 1901 was only completed in 1905.

It was during the period of office of M. Pelletan that the various departments of the navy lost cohesion and their productive capacity was greatly diminished. This minister was responsible for a species of socialistic propaganda which brought about the most deplorable results in so far as the efficiency of the navy was concerned. *Le Journal*, in its summary of the conclusions of the commission of enquiry into the state of naval administration, admitted that money had been wasted in petty errors and foolish blunders, in orders and counter-orders, on untried guns, on worthless boilers, on white powder which turned green, on shells which destroyed the gunners, on 16-centimetre turrets in which 19-centimetre guns had been placed. "The money," said this newspaper, "has passed through ignorant hands, and slipped through fools' fingers."

Drastic changes were necessary to stop the alarming deterioration that was taking place, for the nation had not, for fully ten years, been getting anything near the full measure of sea-power to which it was entitled by the annual sums voted. Between 1900 and 1909 France expended 129 millions sterling on her navy, and in the same period Germany devoted 121 millions

to that branch of national defence, and at the end of the decade it was found that the country spending the larger sum had dropped down to a fifth place in the scale of world sea-power, while with her smaller outlay Germany had risen to the second place. In other words, the French had paid for the second place and only realised the fifth !

In this crisis Admiral Boué de Lapeyrère was appointed Minister of Marine, and was provided with a civilian Under-Secretary of State to act as assistant and be responsible with him for civil administration. Since this appointment much leeway has been made up, although the nation has had to mourn the loss of the *Liberté*, which blew up in the crowded naval harbour of Toulon, and has been alarmed more than once on account of the unstable quality of the powder with which the ships have been supplied. At last this danger appears to have been rectified.

The French naval officer receives his training at the naval schools at Brest and Toulon and is generally very keen and capable. He does not enjoy hard conditions from the sporting instinct after the fashion so usual in the British navy, but

his devotion to his work produces very efficient gunnery and admirable handling of submarine craft. For the lower deck the supply of the suitable class of bluejacket might be sadly deficient were it not for the seafaring populations of Brittany and Normandy. At Bologne there was living recently a wrinkled old grandmother who had forty grandchildren, of whom all the males were sailors or fishermen, while several of the girls had become fishwives or had married fishermen or sailors. France owes much to her little weather-beaten grandmothers of this type.

The manning of the fleet is partially carried out by voluntary enlistment, but the main supply is gained by means of the *inscription maritime*, a system established in the latter part of the seventeenth century by Colbert. This method requires all sailors between eighteen and fifty to be enrolled in "the Army of the Sea." They begin their term of seven years of obligatory service at about twenty, two years of the period being furlough. Any man earning his livelihood on inland waters, provided they are tidal or capable of carrying sea-going vessels, is included in the term "sailor." A further supply of men is

SOLDIERS OF FRANCE IN PARIS.

obtained by transferring a certain number of the year's army recruits to the sea service.

Cherbourg, Brest, and Toulon are the chief naval ports, Lorient and Rochefort being of lesser importance. Shipbuilding, however, takes place at each of the five.

The frequent changes make it impossible to discuss the strength of the fleets in the Mediterranean and the Atlantic, or those stationed in colonial waters, but collectively the fighting force of the navy has for the last few years numbered roughly 25 battleships, 15 large armoured cruisers, 16 protected cruisers, 80 or 90 destroyers, 180 torpedo-boats, and about 90 submarines and submersibles. Under the new administration larger ships are being built, and the destroyer is taking the place of the torpedo-boat.

On account of its superiority as a fighting machine the army of France ranks above the navy, and it should have been placed before the navy in the short notes which constitute this chapter. The author has felt, however, that the subject is too complex to deal with in such a book as this. He confesses to blank ignorance as to the efficiency of the French artillery material, although from English sources he gathers that it

is superior to that possessed by almost any other nation. It would be extremely interesting if one could state how far the army is prepared for "the real thing," how much it has learned in recent years, to what extent its very efficient army of the air is a source of strength, and whether the rifle at present in use is as perfect a weapon as those of other countries. These are subjects much discussed by the inexpert, and the author does not feel competent to deal with them.

In the present year (1913) the period of service for the conscripts who form the army was raised from two to three years, and by this means the numbers of the peace strength were enormously increased from the former establishment of a little over half a million men. The new law did not add, as might perhaps be imagined, another quarter of a million to the total. France has not a sufficiently large population to provide such a number of men of the required age and physical fitness. The numbers are, however, considered sufficient to meet the imaginary dangers which threaten her national existence, and the country has now to divert much of its energy to meeting the cost of this regrettable lengthening and

thickening of her big stick. Incidentally the world's prosperity must suffer, and social reforms generations overdue must be postponed! With Ebenezer Elliott one asks again:

> When wilt Thou save the people?
> O God of mercy, when?

SKETCH MAP OF FRANCE

INDEX

Ablutions, personal, 34
Academies, the, 75
Adour, the, 144, 168
Agnosticism, 80, 83
Agriculture, 116
Agrippa, 161
Aigues-Mortes, 127, 163
Aix-en-Provence, 164
Algerian wine, 125
Allier, the, 147
Alms - giving in churches, 44
Alps, 123, 124
Amboise, 150
Amiens, 203
Andely, Le Petit, 154
Angers, Château d', 150
Anglo-Norman horses, 123
Angoulême, 200
Apache, the, 96, 97
Arles, 130, 162, 164, 195, 196, 200
Armoricans, the, 7
Army, the, 209
Arrondissement, the, 60
Asses, 123
Assize, Courts of, 63
Aube, the, 152
Augustus Caesar, 161, 181
Auvergnes, the, 146
Aversier, the, 131
Avignon, 162, 164
Ay, 126
Baccalauréat de l'enseignement, 74
Bachelier, Nicholas, 167
Bacteriology, science of, 18
Bagehot, Walter, 53
Banns, announcement of, 42
Barker, Mr. E. H., 106, 116
Bastille, the, 111
Bath, the itinerant, 34
Battle of Flowers at Nice, 171
Bayonne, 168
Beauce, La, plain of, 115, 116, 119
Beaugency, 148
Beauvais, 203
Bedroom, the typical, 26, 28
Bergerac, 167
Bernese Alps, 143, 159
Betham-Edwards, Miss, 31
Béziers, 126
Biarritz, 184, 190, 191
Birth-rate, the, 36
Blessington, Lady, 172
Blois, 148
Blois, Château de, 149
Bonne-à-tout-faire, the, 13, 14, 101, 102
  commissions of the, 30
Bordeaux, 167
Bore on the Seine, 155
Boué de Lapeyrère, Admiral, 207
Boulanger, 139

Boulevards, the, 88
Boulogne, 189, 208
Boulogne, Bois de, Paris, 110
Bourseul, Charles, 18
Boy Scouts in France, 72
Bread, French, 87
Brest, 207, 209
Brieg, 158
Brittany, 11, 12, 122, 123, 131, 189, 208
  megalithic remains, 7
Brougham and Vaux, Lord Chancellor, 170
Brunel, Isambard, 18
Buckwheat, 115
Butcher, the French, 32
Byron, Lord, 159
Byzantine architecture, 193, 199, 200, 201

Cabourg, 184
Caen, 88, 201
Caesar, Gaius Julius, 10
Cafés, the, 86, 87, 88, 113
Calvaries, roadside, 122
Cannes, 170, 174
Canton, the, 60
Carcassonne, 198
Carmargue, the, 163
Carnac, prehistoric remains at, 194
Carnavalet, Musée, Paris, 109
Carts, country, 118
Casino, the, 171, 176, 178
Cassation, Cour de, 63
Catherine de Medici, 150
Cattle, 123
Caudebec, 155, 156
Cevennes, the, 115, 123, 145, 146
  peasants of, 128-130
Charente, the, 144
Chartres, 202
Château Gaillard, 153
Château life, 133-137
Chatillon, 152
Chaumont, Château de, 150
Chenonceaux, Château de, 150
Cherbourg, 205, 209
Chestnuts, 115
Children, training of, 38, 39
Churches, 78
  attendance at, 78
  decorations in, 79, 80
  irreverent behaviour in, 78
Church-going, women and, 79
Cimbri, 157
Civil Code, the, 14, 42, 47, 66
Cleanliness, 33
Clermont-Ferrand, 200
Cluny, Hôtel, Paris, 110
Coal consumption, 29
Concierge, the, 38, 97, 98, 99
Conciergerie, the, Paris, 110
Conscription, 210
Constantine, Emperor, 196
Constitution, the French, 50, 51, 52, 53
Conversation in the *château*, 139
Cooking, French, 2, 3
Corniche Roads, the, 179, 180, 181
Corrèze, 115
Costebelle, 173
Crau, La, 163, 164
Critical faculty of the French, 20
Curé, the, 83, 84, 85

Deauville, 183
Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the, 50, 51, 52
Demolins, M., 71
Deputies, Chamber of, 55
  salaries of, 59
Diane de Poitiers, 150
Dieppe, 187
Dinard, 189
Discipline, lack of, 47
Dive, the, 184
Divorce laws, 44, 45

Doctors, fees of, 131, 132
d'Or, Iles, 173
Dordogne, the, 167
Dot, the, 47
Dreyfus, Captain A., 63
Duelling, 139-142
Dumas, the elder, 139
Durance, the, 164

Ebro, the, 151
Economies of the French, 21
Education, expenditure on, 67, 68
Education and social status, 75
Educational system, 72
Edward the Confessor, 156
Edward VII., King, 190
English Channel, the, 6
Épernay, 126
Esplanade, on the Riviera, the, 176, 177
Essonne, the, 152
Estérel Mountains, 173, 174
Étaples, 189
Étoile district of Paris, 89
Étretat, 153, 184, 185
Eu, 187
Euric, king of the Visigoths, 166
Evreux, 204

Faculties, the State, 75
Family Council, the, 34, 35
Farms, 119, 120
Fécamp, 186
Five o'clock, le, 135
Flail, use of, 118
Flamboyant style, 204
Fontainebleau, forest of, 124
Food, high cost of, 105
Forests of France, 124
Forez, plain of, 146
France as a colonising nation, 48
Franchise, the, 56
Franks, the, 10
Fréjus, 173

French enterprise, 65
French people, origin of, 11, 12, 32
Frenchwomen, dress of, 2
Funerals, 79
Furnishing of the *château*, 135, 136
Furniture, household, 28

Galatia, 10
Gallia Comata, 161
Games at *Lycées*, 72
Garavan, 170, 182
Gard, the, 162, 195
Garde républicaine, the, 64, 93
Garonne, the, 144, 164-167
Gascons, the, 11
Gaul, early tribes of, 7, 8
Gauls, the, 9
Gendarmerie, the, 64
Geneva, Lake of, 159, 164
George, Mr. W. L., 81
Gironde, the, 167
Gisors, 204
Golf-courses, 171, 188
Grievances, endurance of, 49, 50
  redress of, 19
Gris Nez, Cape, 6, 153
Guise, Duc de, 150

Habeas Corpus, the right of, 52
Hannibal, 157
Hardelot, 189
Harfleur, 156
Hausmann, the architect, 113
Havre, Le, 156
Hedges, lack of, 121
Holdings, average size of, 116
Holmes, Mr. T. Rice, 33
Home life, 25
Home-sur-Mer, Le, 184
Honfleur, 156
Hope, Sir John, 168
Horses, breeding of, 122, 123
Hotels, 3

Hotels, French and English, contrasted, 32, 33
Household furnishing, 26
repairs, 26
Housemaid's work done by men, 25
Housing, 37
in Paris, 104
Huguenots, 150
Hunting parties, 136
Husbandry, primitive, 117
Hyères, 172

Ideas, the great, of the French, 17, 18
Inscription maritime, 208
Institut de France, 75
Irreligion, 82, 83

Jeune fille, the, 39, 40, 46, 69
Jewish communities, 81
Juge d'instruction, 63
Juge de paix, 35, 61, 62, 63
Jumièges, Abbey of, 156
Jura, the, 123, 143

Lamartine, 139
Landais, the, 11
Landes, Les, 123, 124
Langeais, Château de, 150
Language, the French, 8, 11
Langres, Plateau de, 152
Lannemezan, plateau of, 165
Lauzan, Hôtel de, Paris, 110
Le Parc, 160
Le Puy-en-Velay, 76, 146, 200
Liberté, destruction of the, 207
Libourne, 167
Lillebonne, 156, 198
Locke, Mr. J. W., 113
Loing, the, 152
Loire, the, 144-150, 156
Lorient, 209
Louis XIV., 110
Louvre, Palais du, Paris, 110
Lugdunum, 161
Lutetia Parisiorum, 110
Lycées, the, 39, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74
Lycées for girls, 69
Lyons, 61, 160, 161, 162, 198

Madeleine, the, 44
Maeterlinck, 156
Mairie, the, 43
Maison paternelle, la, 35, 38
Maladetta Chain, 165
Mariage d'inclination, the, 40
Marie Antoinette, 110
Maritime Alps, 164
Marketing, 30, 103
Marne, the, 152
Marriage, enquiries before, 24
parental control of, 40, 41, 42
Martin, Cap, 181
Martinière, La, 148
Mary Stuart, 150
Maure Mountains, 173
Meals, 31
Meat, the cutting of, 32
Medical services in the country, 131
Megalithic remains of Brittany, 7
Mentone, 181, 182
Merovingian architecture, 198, 199, 200
Métayage system, the, 117
Métayers, 117
Meudon Woods, 141
Midi, the, 118
Midinette, the, 13, 33, 94, 95, 96
Ministry, the, 56
Misconceptions concerning France, 13
Mistral, the, 163
Monaco, 177
Prince of, 178
Monopolies, State, 60
Montaigne, 140
Monte Bego, 118
Monte Carlo, 177, 178, 179

Montmartre, 107
Mont St. Michel, 202
Morals of the French, 16, 17
Moselle, the, 151
Mules, 122

Nantes, 148
Napoleon, 67, 140
  modern France the work of, 65
Napoleon III., 55
Napoule, La, 171, 174
Narbonne, 10, 126, 198
National debt, 60
Navy, the, 205-209
Neste, the, 165
Nevers, 147
Nice, 171, 176, 177
Nîmes, 162, 194
Normandy, 115, 116, 118, 119, 122, 123, 126, 208
  architecture of, 201
  people of, 12
Notre Dame, Paris, 203
Noyon, 202
Nuns as medical practitioners, 132

Odours of France, 5
Oiseaux, Montagnes des, 173
Olive, the, 162
Omnibuses of Paris, 91, 101
Orange, 162, 196
Orleans, Forêt d', 124
Orne, the, 184
Orthez, 168
Oxen, draught, 118, 124

Parc Monceaux, Paris, 108
Paris, cab-drivers of, 1, 2
  compared with London, 110, 111, 112
  Étoile district, 107
  fortifications of, 112
  high prices in, 29
  high rents of, 29
  home life in, 25
Paris, Plage, 189
  prisons, 65
  Roman, 110
  St. Antoine District, 109
  Sainte Chapelle, 109
  St. Étienne-du-Mont, 109
  St. Germain, 109
  St. Jacques, 109
  smoke of, 107
  streets of, 86, 87, 107, 108, 109
Pau, 191, 192
Pau, Gave de, 168, 192
Peasant, costume of, 126
  life, 114-131
  ownership of land, 114, 115
  women, 130
Pelletan, M., 206
Pennine Alps, 143, 159
Percheron horses, 123
Perdu, Mont, 165
Périgueux, 197, 198
Philippe Auguste, 150
Phoenician traders, 164
Phylloxera, the, 125
Pigs, 123
Pinay, 145
Pistonnage, 58
Plato, 183
Poitiers, 200
Poitou, plain of, 144
Police, 64
Policemen of Paris, 90, 91
Politeness of the French, 99
Pont du Gard, 157, 195
Pont du Roi, 165
Pratz, Mdlle. de, 95, 105
Première Instance, Court of, 61
President, the, 57, 58
Prison system, 64
Protective tariffs, 104
Protestants in France, 81
Provence, scenery of, 163
Public Instruction, Minister of, 68

Pyrenees, the, 123, 124, 165, 191, 192
Pyrimont, 160

Rapidity of speech, 15
Reason, Festival of, 197
Religion of the French, 76, 77
Rents in Paris, 103, 104
Revolution, the, 50, 62, 197
Rheims, 203
Rhone, the, 127, 143, 157, 160, 161-165
Rhone Glacier, 144, 158
Richard Cœur-de-Lion, 153
Riviera, the, 169-183
Road, rule of the, 90
Roanne, 145, 147
Robespierre, 110
Rochefort, 139, 209
Roman architecture in France, 193-199
Roman Catholicism, 81
Rouen, 154, 155, 203

Sabatier, Paul, 84
St. Bartholomew, Massacre of, 150
St. Bénézet, 157
Ste. Beuve, 139
St. Denis, Paris, 78, 200, 202
St. Étienne, 145, 146
St. Gaudens, 166
St. Georges de Boscherville, 201
St. Germain, Faubourg, Paris, 106, 111
St. Gilles, 163
St. Jean de Luz, 190, 191
St. Martory, 166
St. Maurice, 158
St. Michel, Mont, 202
St. Raphaël, 173
St. Rémy, 197
St. Valery-en-Caux, 186
St. Wandrille, 156
Sand, George, 128-130
Sanitation, imperfection of, 88, 89
Saône, the, 160, 161
Scholarships, State, 69
School-boy, the, 73
Schoolmistress, the lay, 69, 70
Schools, 85
Segusiani, the, 161
Seine, the, 11, 150-157
Senate, the, 55
Servants, female, 26
Sévigné, Marquise de, 110
Sheep, 123
Sherard, Mr. Robert, 141
Shooting parties, 136
Shop assistants, 100
Sologne, the, 148
Soult, Marshal, 168
Strabo, 164
Strong, Rowland, 92
Submarine, France and the, 18
Superstitions among the peasantry, 131

Tancarville Castle, 156
Tancarville, Raoul de, 201
Taine, H. A., 65
Tarascon, 162
Tarbais horses, 123
Tarbes, 123
Taxation, 59
  indirect, 60
Taxis, horse-drawn, in Paris, 92
Telephone, inventor of, 18
Tenda, Col di, 172
Teutones, 157
Thiers, 139
Thrift, the need for, 24
Thriftiness of the French, 14, 21
Toques, the, 183
Toulon, 207, 209
Toulouse, 166
  plain of, 124
Touquet, Le, 188
Tours, 144
Town planning in France, 112
Traffic of Paris, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94

Trees, roadside, 121
Tréport, 187
Tribunal correctionnel de l'arrondissement, 61
Trou du Taureau, 165
Trouville, 183
Tuileries, the, Paris, 110
Turbie, La, 181

Universities, the, 74

Valence, 162
Valescure, 173
Vallais, the, 159
Veuillot, 139
Veules, 186
Vienne, 162, 197, 200
Vikings, the, 154
Villages, 120
Villefranche, 177
Vine, the, 163
Vines, American, 125
Virgin, representations of the, 76
Visigothic architecture, 199
Vosges, the, 123, 143
Vulgarity in illustrated papers, 15, 16

Waddington, Mary K., 136
Washing days, 138
Wedding ceremonies, 43, 44
Wellington, Duke of, 168, 191
William the Conqueror, 156, 184, 201
Wine-grower, the, 125
Woman in business, the, 46
Women, position of, among the peasants, 128

Yonne, the, 152
Young, Arthur, 166

Zola, Émile, 128

THE END

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